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PATH OF LIFE

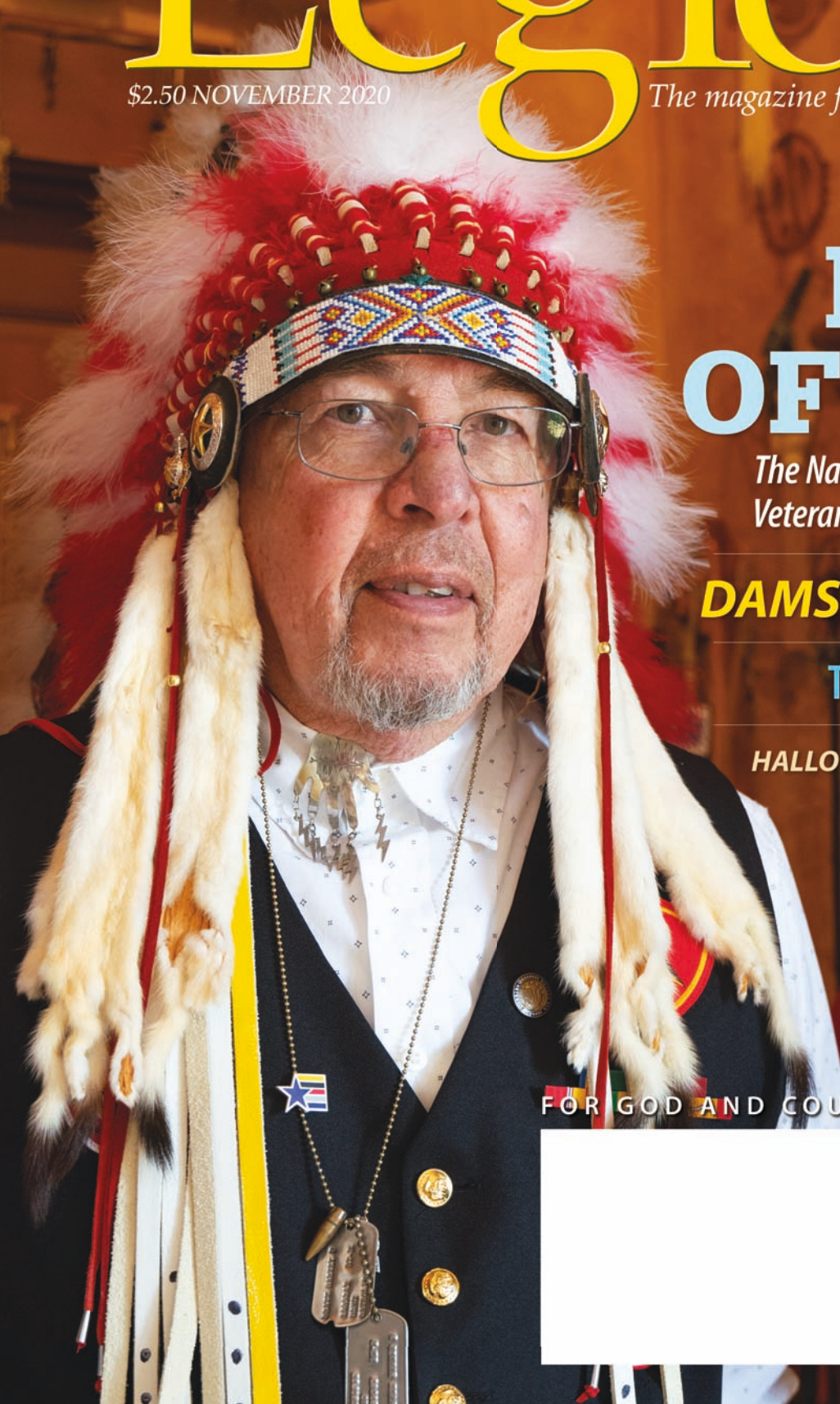
*The National Native American
Veterans Memorial's meaning*

DAMS IN DISTRESS

The 'Frozen Chosin'

HALLOWED GROUND FOR IKE

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY SINCE 1919



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Legion

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November 2020 • Vol. 189, No. 5

SOLDIER AND STATESMAN

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial, honoring the achievements and vision of the World War II supreme allied commander and 34th president, opened to the public Sept. 18. **See story on page 46.**

Photo courtesy
Dwight D. Eisenhower
Memorial Commission



ON THE COVER

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The National Native American Veterans Memorial designer and forensic artist describes a journey he did not map out.

By Jeff Stoffer Photo by Ben Mikesell

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Recent failures in Michigan underscore the stark choice facing private, state and federal dam owners. *By Ken Olsen*

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The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its nearly 2 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 12,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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Our WWII Story

In all the various accounts of the World War II surrender ceremony aboard USS *Missouri*, the pictures seem to focus on the arrival of the Japanese delegation. Your double-wide cover is the first I have seen of the other side of the table, with the Allies arrayed in deep ranks and standing together as one. What an outstanding image.

— Gary L. Hoe, Albuquerque, N.M.

The epic September cover gave us a panoramic view of Japan's formal surrender to the Allied powers aboard USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, officially ending World War II. I was privileged to be aboard the ship a month later when *Missouri* steamed into New York Harbor for a Navy Day celebration.

I was one of a busload of elementary school children transported to the pier by the New York Police Department, from St. Dominic's Home in Blauvelt, N.Y. Like many, I was a product of the Depression, abandoned by parents and sent to the orphanage with my five brothers and one sister.

When our oldest brother, George, turned 17 in 1943, he walked the 30 miles or so to the military recruiting office to enlist in the Navy. On Feb. 11, 1945, his ship was sunk by a Japanese submarine-launched torpedo, immediately killing

George and 166 replacement soldiers and crewmen.

I visited *Missouri* with pride and apprehension. I stood in sheer amazement at the beauty and grandeur of this amazing ship, mindful of its superior warfighting capabilities and platform as an instrument of world peace – the hope of a caring nation embodied in the structure of a massive 45,000-ton battleship.

George's grave is in the depths of the Pacific, but he has a headstone at Arlington National Cemetery in a section reserved for servicemen whose bodies were never recovered.

— James E. Merna, Annapolis, Md.

I really enjoyed the September issue's dedication to the end of World War II. Thank you for publishing my submission on my father from Legiontown. He would have loved it.

— Krieger William Henderson III, Cincinnati

About the bombs dropped on Japan: the first was dropped from *Enola Gay* but the second was dropped from *Bockscar*.

– Gilbert Stokes, Leesburg, Ga.

The sailors, the seamen, who served on Merchant Marine ships were not Marines, but mariners. They were employees, not warriors. I am surprised the Marine Corps hasn't complained about that gross error of identification. The term "Merchant Marines" makes them equal to U.S. Marines.

– Douglas Perret Starr, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Editor's note: The American Merchant Marine Museum clarifies that these men were "‘merchant mariners,’ possibly ‘commercial seafarers,’ but never ‘merchant marines.’"

Legion Family values

The letter from the American Legion Family (September) concerning race relations and policing was well-balanced, fair and to the point. Well done.

– Thomas M. Bock, New York

The American Legion Family open letter to members and friends was good but lacking in substance in one primary area. It required a clear statement that the Legion does not support anarchy and sedition in any capacity. The letter mentions white supremacists but not the extreme left's anarchists and seditionists, which are equally unwanted. Not identifying these other groups is a serious oversight.

– Robert O. Brewster, Port Orange, Fla.

Marijuana banking legislation

I read with interest the op-eds by Justin Strekal and Scott Chipman about marijuana banking legislation (Big Issues, September). Both points of view miss the critical issue in the debate. The government, Congress or otherwise, has no constitutional right to regulate with whom banks may do business.

Marijuana is a terrible drug and has done much harm to many people. Still, banks should be allowed to serve all customers regardless of political affiliation. Congress can make something illegal, as it did during the Prohibition days, but prohibiting any legal business from doing business with another legal entity is unconstitutional.

– Ed Ehrhart, Escondido, Calif.

My American Legion family

My children live some distance from me, and my dear wife recently passed away. Our local American Legion post has always been a haven of friendship, but in recent years it has given me support in many ways, beyond the physical and social. During my wife's lengthy illnesses and my recent recuperation from a broken hip, we were able to access many of the post's stock of home health aids and wheelchairs. Additionally, the post sends me three large lunches a week, at no cost.

Several post members visited my wife in her living-room hospital bed the day before she died. Our post chaplain and my pastor son from St. Joseph, Mo., co-officiated at her funeral. Her

Auxiliary unit did an impressive ritual as well.

My neighbor, a member of the Sons of The American Legion squadron, mows my lawn and plows my driveway if I don't beat him to it. He also drives me to medical appointments.

This post's outstanding officers, men and women, are family and every bit as close as actual relatives. God bless them.

– Richard F. Doyle, American Legion Post 225, Forest Lake, Minn.

Brave boy

I cried when I read about the 6-year-old boy who protected his younger sister from a dog attack (Rapid Fire, September). "If someone had to die, I thought it should be me" – that has to be the most selfless comment I have heard in a long time. What a great kid!

– Mary Jane Reetz, Brainerd, Minn.

'The Truth About Shingles'

It is a disappointment that Martin Sayers' article (Living Well, September) didn't mention the very effective vaccines for shingles, covered under many Medicare Part D drug plans.

– Daniel W. Ryan, Skokie, Ill.

Editor's note: In October's Big Issues, NATO stands for "North Atlantic Treaty Organization." Past National Commander Dominic DiFrancesco's post is American Legion Post 594 in Middletown, Pa. (Rapid Fire, October). And in September's "Lore of the Legion," the ribbon on the vase on the POW/MIA table is traditionally red, not yellow.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

Include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters published are subject to editing. Due to the volume of mail received, not every letter can be acknowledged.

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Respectful disagreement cannot divide us

Fifty-six years ago, Americans headed to the polls for the first time since the assassination of a beloved president. The nation was fighting a hot war in Southeast Asia and a cold war against a nuclear adversary. Americans voted knowing their future depended on it. This cherished right is just as important today. One of my predecessors, National Commander Daniel Foley, wrote a message in 1964 that still resonates. What follows is an abbreviated version of his magnificent words:

"At a time of rapid change and recurring crisis in national affairs, one factor remains constant. The loudest noise and the most confused counsel continue to come from extremists.

"By extremists, I mean those individuals who would save America by forsaking its free institutions. I mean not just communists and neo-fascists who openly assail our system but, more especially, those who, in the conviction that theirs is the only right view, have lost sight of – and faith in – the fundamental processes of self-government.

"You know the type as well as I do. They claim to have the one true answer to every problem. They talk of setting aside the law when the law offends them. They are quick to cry treason, slow to admit error, and indifferent to arguments and facts that do not support their beliefs. They are not really leftists or rightists – but simply modern anarchists – though many of them would be shocked at the idea.

"There are two basic flaws in this brand of extremism. It violates the spirit and traditions of real Americanism. It seeks a course of action that is bound to fail. As Legionnaires, we bow to no one in our concern and zeal for the future security and greatness of America. We share a special responsibility to uphold the institutions which alone can be the means of realizing that future.

"Now, more than ever before, Americans need to keep their values in clear focus. Our resort must be to reason, not to emotion; to persuasion, not to violence; to perseverance, not to panic.

"It isn't necessary or desirable that we all think alike. It is essential that we espouse our differences reasonably with good will and due regard for other opinions. Honest disagreement honorably expressed cannot divide Americans. Abraham Lincoln in a previous era of strong feeling said, 'There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law.'

"The citizen who seeks recourse to hatred or violence as the answer to the nation's problems is turning away from an acceptable and workable American solution. The American Legion has always asserted its right to speak out vigorously and candidly on public issues. At the same time, I assure you that our criticism will be constructive and responsible.

"We champion the needs of disabled and aging war veterans whose past services are too soon forgotten by many of their countrymen. But our difference with those who oppose us is one of judgment, not of patriotism; and the best hope for our cause lies in education and persuasion, not vindictiveness. This is the American way.

"Ours is a big country with big and perplexing problems. The answers do not come easily. They will not come at all if substantial numbers of Americans permit themselves to be led into extravagances of hate and fear."

James W. "Bill" Oxford



National Commander
James W. "Bill" Oxford

MEMORANDA



BUDDY CHECKS AND VOTING

The American Legion's Get Out the Vote program urging posts to facilitate registration, understanding and participation in the election process is an ideal opportunity to conduct Buddy Checks on isolated veterans and families who may need help. Whether local veterans need groceries, supplies, camaraderie or rides to the polls, Legionnaires are urged to reach out.

 legion.org/vote

 legion.org/membership/buddycheck

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

With Americans continuing to practice social distancing and protect the most vulnerable among us during the pandemic, National Family Week – Nov. 22-28, the week of Thanksgiving – may look different this year. A Children & Youth brochure describes how to promote, encourage and celebrate healthy families and communities.

 legion.org/publications

A FOUNDATION OF **HOPE**

FOR DISABLED VETERANS



**I was about to give up...
I wouldn't have known where to go.**

*Korean War Army veteran Willie Alvin Cousin,
who received long-overdue and wrongly denied
VA disability benefits after his case was reopened
and won by American Legion Department
Service Officer K. Robert Lewis*

FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILIES IN NEED



**These were important things.
It helped them not get behind
in their rent... It helped them
put food in the refrigerator.**

*Coast Guard Vice Commandant Adm. Charlie Ray
after American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance
helped more than 3,120 children whose active-duty families
were affected by the federal government shutdown*



Your gift provides hope for disabled veterans and children in need.

The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation, formerly the American Legion Endowment Fund, delivers vital financial support for service officers worldwide who are working on VA disability claims for more than 700,000 U.S. military veterans at any one time, all the time. The fund also supplies American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance cash grants for military and veteran families with minor children at home, who have encountered hardships beyond their control and need short-term help covering the costs of shelter, food, utilities, clothing or other necessities.



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778

Job seekers who registered and participated in a Sept. 15

American Legion

Department of Texas virtual career fair supported by the national American Legion Employment & Education Division. The veterans met with 226 employers. The Texas Veterans Commission and the Texas Workforce Commission co-produced the event, which drew veterans from across the country and around the world.

► 7,337

American Legion posts that conducted Veterans Day ceremonies in 2019, according to the 2019-2020 Consolidated Post Report, with 70 percent of posts submitting their information

► 1,489

American Legion posts that participated in Veterans in the Classroom programs in 2019 and 2020, according to the newest national Consolidated Post Report

"If you're a veteran and you're sick, they put you on trial. You're a defendant in a trial about your own health ... We always have money for war, but we never seem to have money for the warrior. The whole thing is to not let this happen in the dark."

Jon Stewart, former host of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," in a Sept. 15 gathering on Capitol Hill to promote the American Legion-supported Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and Other Toxins Act of 2020



► 25

Minimum number of Alabama American Legion posts that contributed food and supplies to provide relief in Louisiana after Hurricane Laura pummeled the state. The Alabama American Legion Family collected items from across the state and filled five 26-foot U-Haul trucks, a 53-foot semi trailer and other vehicles, delivering them to a staging facility in Baton Rouge, La., where Legionnaires began distributing to locations in need.

\$50,000

Donation from the American Legion Department of Indiana to help with a \$450,000 expansion of the 9/11 Memorial in downtown Indianapolis, delivered on Patriot Day





By paddle, pedal, pool and pavement

The American Legion's 100 Miles for Hope initiative has proven, among many things,

that the organization's veterans are eager to get outside, breathe fresh air and exercise – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, with state and local restrictions on group gatherings.

With more than 4,000 registrants through September, the program has also proven that Legionnaires can – and will – innovate on an idea.



Photo by Jeric Wilhelmson

Murrieta, Calif., Post 852 member Charlie Parker, 75, took the challenge to stroke 100 miles, 45 feet at a time, in a swimming pool. A series of accidents put him in a wheelchair about three years ago, but that doesn't slow him down. "I have been a swimmer most of my life," he says. "I like doing things for other people, so there is my inspiration. The choice to swim 100 miles is because that's the only thing I can do, and it gives me a personal challenge."

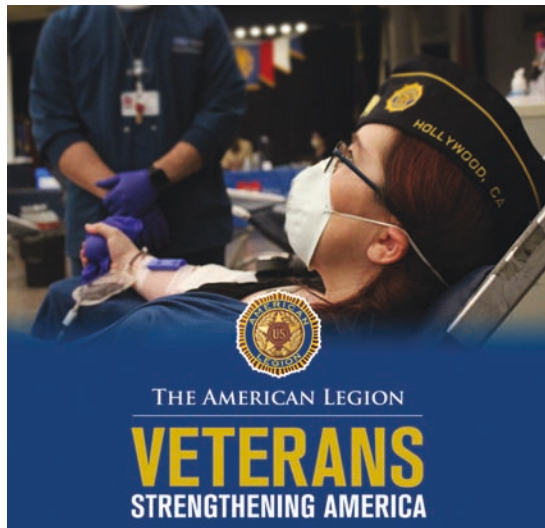


Photo by Casey Perrine

Havre de Grace, Md., Post 47 Commander Michael Bush and others from his American Legion Family decided to paddle the 100 miles in kayaks along the Susquehanna River. "I'm really enjoying the trips," he said after 68 miles. "It's such a beautiful area around the Susquehanna River. There is a lot of wildlife, and some of the mornings when I am out by myself, it is just extremely peaceful and very enjoyable. It's an opportunity to reset the mind from the trials and tribulations of the workday."

There is still time to join the 100 Miles challenge and support The American Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation. Learn more and register online:

legion.org/100miles



FROM NATIONAL TO YOU

'Veterans Strengthening America'

New video PSAs available

A new set of video public service announcements can be downloaded and shared with local media from [PSA Direct](https://psadirect.com). The videos – at 60, 30 and 15 seconds each – show the many ways the organization is stepping up in local communities to confront the COVID-19 pandemic and more.

psadirect.com/client/legion

Post and department communications officers and staff are urged to contact local media outlets and offer the PSAs for airing.

American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford also extends his **Veterans Day message** through video, available for downloading and dissemination on the Legion Vimeo page.

vimeo.com/showcase/4371837

Posts, districts and departments are encouraged to visit [LegionTV](https://legiontv.com) or subscribe to [The American Legion's YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqWz8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8K8), where videos are housed and can easily be shared in social media.

youtube.com/americanlegionHQ

Among the many videos available is a September addition featuring American Legion National Chaplain Edward Harris Jr. delivering the POW/MIA Prayer, with powerful footage to express the organization's enduring quest to seek a full accounting and the repatriation of all who did not come home from wartime service.

Also available for viewing on LegionTV is "To Strengthen a Nation," the 13-episode set of videos documenting The American Legion's first century of service, topic by topic.

Statehood for Puerto Rico



SUPPORT

Luis D. Dávila

■ Dávila served as deputy director and general counsel of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration in Washington.



OPPOSE

Javier A. Hernández

■ Hernández is the author of "PREXIT: Forging Puerto Rico's Path to Sovereignty."

Puerto Rico has been a territory of the United States since 1898, and Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship by birth in 1917.

As citizens of the United States, Puerto Ricans have participated in every major U.S. military engagement since World War I.

Puerto Rico has a proud tradition of military service. More than 375,000 Puerto Ricans are veterans, in active service or reservists in the U.S. military. Members of the Army's 65th Infantry Division, known as the "Borinqueneers" (a hybrid of Borinquen, the Taino name for Puerto Rico, and Buccaneers), have received many awards and recognitions, including the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award Congress can bestow.

Sadly, the federal government has failed Puerto Rico's brave men and women in uniform. They cannot vote for their commander in chief, and lack equal rights and full representation in all levels of government.

When Puerto Rico's soldiers return home, they are deprived of the same benefits they would receive if they resided in any of the 50 states of the union. As an example, Puerto Rico has only one hospital administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which attends to a significant and growing population on the island.

Puerto Ricans are Americans. We take pride in our patriotic claims for freedom, equality and justice for all. Our soldiers have defended that freedom with their blood. It is only fair we are granted a seat at the table, one where we can contribute to the nation's success and its continuation as a beacon of democracy across the world.

The issue of Puerto Rico annexation into the United States (many call it "statehood") has resurfaced due to the Nov. 3 plebiscite. Sadly, Americans and Puerto Ricans alike are unaware of the dire consequences that annexation would

impose on Puerto Rico and the United States.

Annexing Puerto Rico is bad news because it will force Puerto Ricans to say "yes" to losing Spanish as their national language and force Americans to have two U.S. senators and six U.S.

representatives from what will be the poorest "state" of the union.

Americans need to understand the bait-and-switch annexationists employ. They talk about "equality for the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico" in English, and tout in Spanish their increased dependency on U.S.-funded welfare programs while never having to become Americans, and keeping their Olympic team. They don't want Americans to know that in 2014 the General Accountability Office published a scathing report detailing how costly annexation would be for Puerto Rico and the United States.

In fact, annexation would bring great disunion into the union. Less than 20 percent of Puerto Ricans speak English and most don't consider themselves American. A viable solution is sovereignty via free association.

A sovereign Puerto Rico would become a valuable ally and strategic partner, supporting U.S. national security efforts. Puerto Rico is ready for freedom, and Americans can help by demanding their elected officials stop the threat of statehood and support a transition to sovereignty.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Advocates of statehood say Puerto Rico deserves its own U.S. senators and representatives. Critics say it should either maintain its status as a territory – belonging to, but not part of, the United States – or have independence.

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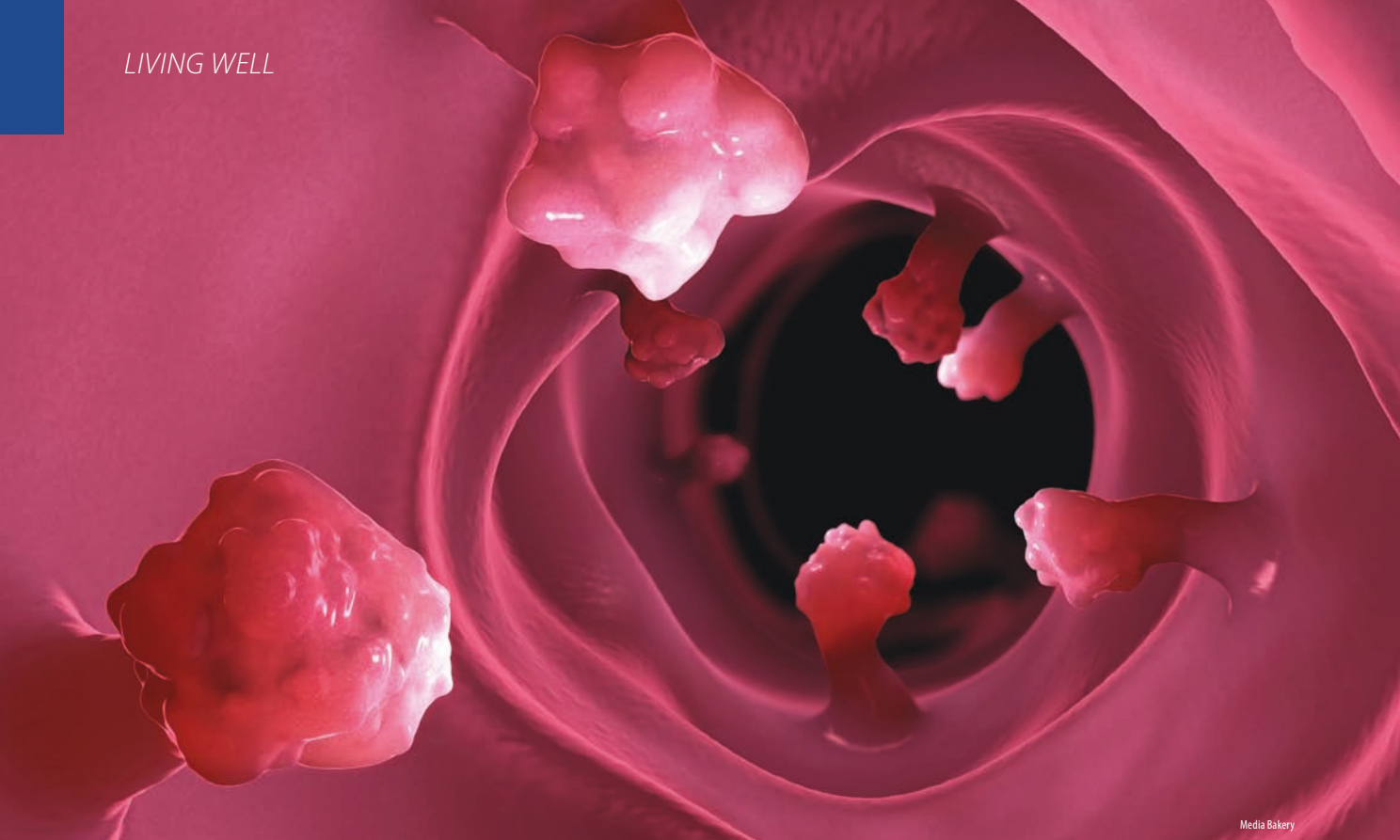


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Media Bakery

What to know about colorectal cancer

BY BETH W. ORENSTEIN

New cases of colorectal cancer in adults younger than 55 have risen steadily over the past three decades.

The reasons behind the increase aren't clear, though Durado Brooks, vice president of prevention and early detection for the American Cancer Society (ACS), thinks it is most likely due to a combination of environmental and behavioral risk factors.

Obesity, particularly excess fat at the waist, is a risk factor for colorectal cancer. That, too, is on the rise in the United States, Brooks says. A diet high in red, processed or charred meats is another risk factor.

African-Americans, in particular, face a greater risk of colon cancer. ("Black Panther" actor

Chadwick Boseman died of colon cancer at 43 in August.)

While the higher numbers of cases of colorectal cancer

are alarming, the good news is that it is highly treatable if caught early, Brooks says. Thanks to advances in screening and treatment options, the five-year survival rate for colorectal cancer is 90 percent if it is found before it has spread.

Various tests are used to screen for colorectal cancer. The most common is the colonoscopy, in which a doctor is able to examine the intestines while a patient sleeps. They do so by inserting a small flexible tube equipped with a tiny camera and light into the colon to look for abnormalities.

The ACS recommended regular colorectal cancer screenings for people at average risk beginning at 50. But because of the rise in the number of cases among adults younger than 50, the ACS revised its recommendation in 2018 for people at average risk to undergo colonoscopies at 45.

The U.S. Preventive Task Force is reviewing all available data and looking into whether it too should lower the age of recommended screenings from 50 to 45.

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

See **COLORECTAL CANCER** on page 16



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COLORECTAL CANCER *continued from page 14*

HOW IT STARTS Colon and rectal cancers typically start as small polyps, Brooks says. The goal of screening is to identify and remove these polyps long before they become cancerous and cause symptoms. Studies show it can take as long as 10 years before a polyp turns into cancer, so if it is removed early it eliminates that progression.

A colonoscopy is an excellent screening tool because if it finds precancerous polyps they can be removed at that time, Brooks says.

However, many people are reluctant to undergo a colonoscopy screening. Some dislike the idea that their colons must be cleaned out before the procedure. According to Brooks, colonoscopy prep has improved in recent years, with most physicians moving to split-dose prep, which is half the day before, and half five hours before, the procedure. The split prep makes it easier to tolerate.

At-home stool testing kits such as Cologuard and FIT are also available. These tests require patients to send stool samples to the lab. While they screen effectively for colon cancer, they aren't as good as a

colonoscopy at finding precancerous polyps, Brooks says. They need to be followed up with a standard colonoscopy if positive.

Polyps and early colorectal cancer usually have no symptoms, so it's important to get tested even if you are feeling fine. Symptoms of colon cancer include:

- Rectal bleeding or blood in your stool.
- A change in your bowel habits (such as diarrhea, constipation or narrow stool) that lasts more than a few days.
- Unexplained abdominal pain or cramping.
- A persistent urge to have a bowel movement that doesn't go away after you have one.
- Unexplained weakness and fatigue.
- Unintended weight loss.

If you have risk factors, such as a family history of colorectal cancer, you may need to start screening before 45.

Beth W. Orenstein of Northampton, Pa., is a freelance medical writer and regular contributor to Living Well.

Caution with CBD use

In most states, from drugstores to grocery stores to their own stores, the initials "CBD" are everywhere. They're short for cannabidiol, a chemical compound found in the cannabis plant. With a global market estimated to have topped \$4.5 billion in 2018, CBD sales are projected to grow by more than 20 percent each year through 2025. Companies – and users – tout its effectiveness in treating a variety of conditions, but is CBD right for everyone, especially older people?

According to the informational website cbdorigin.com, studies show that CBD has been linked to possible improvements in more than 50 conditions, from anxiety to inflammation to migraines to obesity. Unlike another cannabis compound, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), CBD does not get users "high."

Studies have not found compelling reasons for older people to avoid CBD use, but they are in one of the groups that needs to approach such use with caution: those taking other medications. If you are considering supplementing or replacing a medication with CBD, it is imperative you talk with your doctor or pharmacist first. They can give expert advice on possible side effects, drug interactions and more.

Before that, do your own research. With FDA industry regulation still underway, CBD is available in a variety of forms by a variety of companies.

Healthline lists the most common forms of CBD as oils and tinctures, creams and lotions, capsules and pills, edibles such as gummies, and vapes.

Lack of FDA regulation means that, at least for now, health insurance does not cover CBD products. And lack of FDA approval means that VA health-care providers cannot prescribe them. But as with medical marijuana, CBD's place in America's health landscape is changing, so stay tuned.

– Laura Edwards



We use seat belts and we insure our houses against fire ... Not every house burns down and not every car has an accident, but it is done as insurance against the actual event.

Peter Palese, professor at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, on the importance of getting a flu shot. Health-care officials are concerned that a bad flu season plus the ongoing pandemic could give rise to a "twindemic."

Source: The Boston Globe



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Arrecifes de Cozumel National Park Wikimedia Commons

Five Affordable Holiday Vacations

Pull off a getaway this winter without blowing the budget.

BY LYN METTLER

Itching to get out of the house this winter? Consider these inexpensive destinations, which offer big fun while allowing for social distancing.

Smoky Mountains, Tennessee The Smokies and the surrounding cities of Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg and Sevierville are a great place to get into the holiday spirit. Consider a stay at the Inn at Christmas Place, which has a decorated tree in every room. Load up on holiday decor next door at the Christmas Place store, then drive through the three cities to see the annual Winterfest light display, which runs through February. Weather permitting, visitors can hike through Great Smoky Mountains National Park. With no admission fee, it's the country's most visited national park.

Big Bend National Park, Texas More Americans are headed to national parks this year, wanting to stick close to home but still get outdoors. Big Bend is among the few national parks that stay warm during the winter months. Visitors can enjoy mountains, desert canyons, waterfalls, hiking trails and views all the way to Mexico. The Big Bend Holiday Hotel in the ghost town of Terlingua makes for a quirky and interesting stay. As with any destination, check ahead to learn about possible closures due to the pandemic.

Fort Myers, Fla. Spread out and enjoy some sunshine in one of the southernmost cities on Florida's Gulf Coast. The area offers plenty of beach choices, including Sanibel Island, Fort Myers Beach, Captiva Island, Marco Island and Naples, many of which are known for their outstanding shelling. Also, don't miss the beautiful gardens at the Edison and Ford Winter Estates.

Pacific Coast Highway Road Trip, California

Take the family on a road trip of breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, stop at sites like Pismo Beach, known for its massive sand dunes; Santa Cruz, with its classic boardwalk; Carmel, filled with fairytale homes; and Big Sur, with its famous bridges and redwoods.

Cozumel, Mexico As one of the few international options for U.S. travelers right now, Cozumel makes a great holiday vacation for those seeking winter warmth. Adventure lovers can scuba dive or snorkel through its turquoise waters. Out of the water, explore the island's Mayan ruins or visit Punta Sur Ecological Park. For shopping, head to nearby San Miguel.

Lyn Mettler is a freelance travel writer who blogs at gototravelgal.com.



Navy veterans Ray Novak and Erich Totsch renovated a 1930s Chicago fireboat and are offering [historic and sunset tours](#) of the Windy City aboard the vessel. [Chicago Fireboat Tours](#), a 100 percent veteran-owned company, offers a \$7 to \$10 per ticket discount for active-duty military, veterans and first responders.

Considering a flight before year's end? Delta is the only U.S. airline that has pledged to leave middle seats open during the holidays and through Jan. 6. Additionally, [United](#), [Delta](#) and [American](#) have eliminated change fees for economy and premium cabin tickets within the United States.




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Artist and Marine Corps
veteran Harvey Pratt at his
home near Guthrie, Okla.

Photo by Ben Mikesell

Harvey Pratt's Path of Life

*National Native American Veterans Memorial designer
and forensic artist describes a journey he did not map out.*

BY JEFF STOFFER

Harvey Pratt will humbly tell you he did not draw up any plan that became his life of art, war, law enforcement, forensic science, tribal leadership, veteran advocacy, national memorial design or the search for truth about bigfoot. He describes himself as “a little different. Things just happen to me. People ask, ‘How did this happen?’ I don’t know.”

One could say that whatever happened to the Cheyenne peace chief and American Legion post commander’s trajectory on Earth began long before he was born. His soul is shaped by ancient ways that have been passed down, generation to generation, for centuries. Running in his blood is also a Revolutionary War figure who was in on the Boston Tea Party, whose children included a frontier trader, fort builder and Indian mediator who married a princess named Owl Woman, daughter of early 19th-century Cheyenne medicine man White Thunder, the tribe’s respected “keeper of the arrows.”

Pratt’s ancestors helped carve out the Santa Fe Trail, one served as a New Mexico territorial governor, and another lost part of his foot to a shrapnel wound on Iwo Jima during World War II; one distant cousin was the legendary western artist Charles M. Russell. Pratt’s mother was a master storyteller, his older brother an internationally acclaimed painter and sculptor.

Beyond genetics, Pratt’s unique journey may have been plotted the day he was born, April 13, 1941, the sixth of seven children, in his mother’s small house in El Reno, Okla. He was a rare “veil baby.”

“It’s a membrane over your face,” Pratt explains. “When they saw that, they said, ‘Oh look at him ... he wants to be a chief.’ Historically, veil babies – there’s one born about every 500,000 – they’re supposed to be gifted. They must have seen that somewhere in our culture, other people born that way. So before I was Harvey Pratt, I was Vehunkis. Vehunkis means, ‘He’s Going to Be a Chief.’”

That distinction came with expectations. “Growing up, they used to tell me, if someone was not feeling well or hurting, as a little boy I would go over there and touch them – their face, their arm or wherever it was – and that scared me. Until I got a little older, I didn’t understand.”

At least a portion of his artistic future was inspired by scarcity. “I had three brothers, and we were raised by a single mother, so we didn’t have a lot. Our grandfather gave us clay so we could make our own toys. We learned how to make animals – horses, people – and I always remember learning how to make a saddle from a little block of clay and put somebody on it. I wasn’t very old. I played with clay my whole life.”

No art program was offered at St. Patrick’s Indian Mission School in Anadarko, Okla., where Pratt and his siblings were students. “We boarded there. One day the priest was coming by, and he caught me drawing. He said, ‘Harvey, that’s pretty good.’ He bought me some art supplies: paints, brushes and some paper. I painted the Crucifixion, and I made everybody Indians. He called some people around, and he sold it for me. I got \$90. Ninety dollars in 1960 was a lot of money.”

He enrolled at Central State College in Edmond, Okla., with hopes of becoming a commercial illustrator, but the faculty there was not as impressed as his childhood teachers were. “The professor would critique different drawings or paintings, and he would always pick mine. He would say, ‘See what this man did here? Don’t do that. This isn’t right.’ He did that so many times, I thought, ‘Hell, I guess I’ll never be an artist.’ So, I changed. I dropped out of art classes and concentrated on psychology, and after a certain point, I got frustrated with college and joined the Marine Corps.”

Like most of his life’s twists, Pratt had no idea then what military service would mean in the long run. His mother was not a fan of the idea. “I call it the silent scream,” Pratt remembers. “I was still in college. ‘I said, Mom, I just joined the Marine Corps and I am leaving in three days.’ I was shocked that she was so devastated. It was because of her brother.

She remembers her brother being wounded and missing in action. I always remembered that – the silent scream.”

He also remembers that he had no idea at the time, in 1962, “what Vietnam was.”

Boot camp was predictably miserable. In his last week there, a drill instructor who thought the sling on his M1 was too slack drove his foot into Pratt’s arm and pinched a nerve. He lost feeling. “I couldn’t do nothing with it,” he remembers. “It terrified the crap out of me. I went to the senior drill instructor

and told him. They sent me back to the base. When they did, from the rifle range back to San Diego, they put me in the back of a dog catcher’s truck, with a wire cage. It’s raining. I’m sitting in there. Cars are driving past me and looking at me. I was so depressed. I looked down, and I had my orders. I took them out, looked at them. They said, ‘Pvt. Pratt will be a good Marine.’ When I saw that, I thought, I can make this. I can do this. I always had that attitude that there were a lot of people before me who made it, and I’m as good as they are. So they never really beat me down.” On his return to the rifle range, Pratt was issued an M14 to go along with his M1, and he made private first class.

He was assigned to the 3rd Marine Division, Military Police. “I thought, military police – that would be pretty cool.” In time, the assignment proved to be much more than cool.

He befriended another young Marine, R.D. Pratt, a Louisiana Cajun of no relation. “A lieutenant came by, and he was looking for volunteers for a special project. We both volunteered to go. In those days, they called it guerrilla warfare training. We trained for two months in Okinawa. I had no idea where Vietnam was. They assigned us to 3rd Recon Battalion, Charlie Company, and our platoon commander’s name was Hughes. They called us Hughes’ Hellions.”

Their primary objectives – in an operation that predated official U.S. combat deployment in Vietnam – were to guard a Da Nang airfield and go wherever necessary to rescue helicopter pilots shot down trying to transport South Vietnamese ground forces. “The Marine Corps was supporting



Pratt joined the Marine Corps in 1962 and headed to Vietnam with the 3rd Marine Division. Photo courtesy Harvey Pratt



Nearly every wall inside Pratt's home is adorned with Native American art, beadwork, military insignia and memorabilia from his career in forensic law enforcement.

Photo by Ben Mikesell

the Vietnamese military, and every time they went out on a strike, the helicopters would take them someplace. Then we would go out with them and land. They would dump us off, and if something happened, they would come back and pick us up and take us wherever someone was down ... We weren't supposed to be there. We had to sign a paper saying you can't talk about this for 10 years." He spent seven months in-country, where he and R.D. Pratt were regularly assigned missions requiring survival skills and stealth.

"It kind of shocked me. When we got to Vietnam, they would say, 'Let the Indian do that. He's good at that.' I thought, I've really got to step up and do a good job because these guys expect that of me. I always tell the story, they called us together (and said), 'We've got a couple of helicopters down, and it's out a ways. We need to get there right now, so we are looking for volunteers. And the volunteers are Pratt and Pratt.' They just called us out – and Carter and Woods. That was my fire team."

Pratt and Pratt built a reputation at Da Nang. "When we were guarding the airfield, R.D. and I captured a Vietnamese who wasn't supposed to be there. We caught him messing around at a helicopter. They took him back later and found some sapper stuff – he was going to try to blow some stuff up. I think they always remembered that we were the only guys who ever captured anybody, me and R.D. That kind of distinguished us a little bit."

The young Cheyenne Marine from Oklahoma knew how to handle himself in the field. "We made a point of that, growing up. When we were little, we would run around barefoot. We would go to the river that was maybe five miles away.

"My grandfather would say, 'You need to learn to do without water.' So he gave us a little pebble about the size of my thumbnail, and we put it in our mouth. He said, 'Make your own water.'"

At 10, Pratt bought his first rifle. "I got \$5 for my birthday, and I had saved \$5. Every year, as a child we chopped cotton and picked cotton for our school clothes and shoes." Or, in this case, half the price of a rifle.

After the tropical heat of Vietnam, Pratt was assigned to "cold-weather training with the military police in Korea for a month – in pup tents on top of a foot of ice; it was terrible. It was deadly cold. They finally moved us into a big tent. What they used for heaters were smudge pots. Just soot. By the time you got out of there, you were covered in soot."

He came stateside, served for a time in supply and was honorably discharged as a lance corporal in 1965, once again looking for college to clarify his future, perhaps as a Marine officer. "I loved the Marine Corps, but I didn't want to stay in as an enlisted person," Pratt says. "I went right back into psychology. I wanted to get a degree so I could go back. So I went back to school and was working at a clothing store in the evenings and weekends. A friend of mine I grew up with at St. Patrick's Indian Mission came in – he was a Comanche boy; we always stayed really close – and he was wearing a police uniform. He's talking to me, and I said, 'Look at you' He said, 'I talked to the chief about you, and he said for you to come visit with him and make an application.'"

A week after he interviewed, Pratt was hired by the Midwest City (Okla.) Police Department. Soon he was making \$100 per week as a patrol officer – "that was some bucks in '66" – and he continued to paint during off-duty hours. Some of his artwork was published in a local newspaper, and colleagues took notice.

"The captain of detectives came by and said, 'Harvey, we've got a lady in the hospital, and she's been shot in the face. Someone tried to rob her, killed her husband in her house, and when she came

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down the hallway he raised up and shot her in the face. She's awake, but we don't know if she is going to make it. Do you think you could go over and draw the guy who shot her?' I said, 'Yeah, I think I could do that.' I had no idea what I was doing. I went over there, and we talked, and I made a drawing."

That first attempt at forensic art led to an arrest and conviction. "We caught that guy off of my drawing. He killed about seven people. I always said, if I hadn't succeeded with that, I probably would have never done another drawing."

Word got around. Neighboring law-enforcement agencies summoned Pratt to do drawings based on witness or victim accounts. He developed a fingerprint and records system, got promoted to detective and was sent to Oklahoma State University to earn his long-awaited degree, in police science. Soon, he was hired by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, and his career in forensic art took off.

"I was the first guy to do color on composites," he explains. "When they saw me doing color drawings, with colored pencils, I started getting inundated from places all over the United States. And I developed an interview technique for witnesses and victims – a questionnaire – on how to discover deception."

Later, he became a pioneer in soft-tissue reconstruction – the sculpting of human faces based on their skulls alone. He worked on some of the nation's most high-profile cases, including the Green River serial killer, Ted Bundy, the I-5 killer and the Oklahoma City bombing; he also helped with terrorist identifications from Iraq and Syria, as well as faces from the Weather Underground Organization. His work helped identify kidnappers in South America and assisted in the pursuit of Oklahoma prison fugitive Randolph Dial.

"I probably did over 5,000 drawings and 2,000 soft-tissue reconstructions, where we find some bones that still have wounds on them or somebody gets shot in the face, or burned ... I'd paint out all the wounds, bullet holes, and open up the eyes and make them look alive, fix their hair, and publish it, and boom, you get an identification."

Human skulls began to arrive at Pratt's home. This was not what he ever imagined. "When I was a kid, we were playing on the river, and we found a human skull. Scared the crap out of us. I was just a little boy. My brother picked it up, dusted it off and

took it into town. I wouldn't touch it – human bones."

By the second decade of his adult career, human bones were part of nearly every workday. Evenings and weekends, meanwhile, were devoted to his love of Native American and western art – painting, sculpting, metal work – and collecting ancient art, artifacts, pottery and jewelry. "It takes me to another place," he says. "I've seen a lot of violence in my career – people who are just not very nice. I kind of step away from that ... got me away from dead bodies and suspects and all that kind of stuff. I like to paint historical things, rather than just made-up things. I like to look at old photographs and paint ... I did the same thing with sculpting, to tell stories about people and what they wore." He sticks primarily to Plains Indians because he says he learned early that it's nearly impossible to accurately depict the unique features of other tribal

cultures, a problem he would later need to solve as designer of the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

Pratt's worlds converged in the mid-2000s when he was recruited by retired San Jose, Calif., police investigator David Paulides on "The Hoopa Project" to collect statements and forensic drawings based on bigfoot sightings from the remote Hoopa Indian reservation in northern

California. The area known as "Bigfoot Alley," made famous by the Oct. 20, 1967, Roger Patterson-Robert Gimlin film of a sasquatch ambling along the rocky banks of Bluff Creek, is largely off limits to non-native visitors. Paulides, following up on a mysterious childhood encounter in northern California and a later story of a sighting from a guide in Canada, wanted to put his interviewing skills to work after retirement to collect as many bigfoot accounts as possible. And he wanted a forensic artist to illustrate the testimonies. "When I received the résumé, I couldn't believe my eyes," Paulides wrote in the first of two books with Pratt as illustrator. "Harvey appeared to be born, raised, trained, educated and professionally molded specifically for working on the Hoopa Bigfoot Research Project. Nobody else I interviewed came close to his credentials."

Harvey and wife Gina Pratt – a Creek Indian and former law enforcement officer – joined Paulides on the Hoopa reservation for interviews and more than 40 sketches based on often-hesitant witness



Pratt is commander of American Legion Post 401 in Clinton, Okla. Photo by Ben Mikesell



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Pratt's paintings and prints have been sold worldwide since his first went for \$90 in 1960 after a mission school priest took interest in his talent. Photo by Ben Mikesell

descriptions, each requiring a signed affidavit that the statement and drawing were accurate. “We had always heard of it my whole life, growing up,” Pratt says of the elusive creature whose likeness has been found in Native American pictograms dating back centuries. “I had heard the stories (including some in Oklahoma), but I had never really gotten into it.” Now, as he is commonly called upon to share his expertise in forensic art for others in law enforcement, Pratt is just as likely to be summoned to bigfoot conferences for similar reasons.

Pratt retired from the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation in 2017, having served not only as a forensic artist and agent but also as a narcotics investigator and assistant and interim director. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Hall of Fame in 2012 and the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame in 2019.

The National Native American Veterans Memorial design came to him in a dream. “A lot of things come to me in dreams. I wake up early in the morning, think about it, work it through my mind ... so I already have an idea of what to do, without having to start working through it. It was my experience of a lifetime – the brain just put it all together for me – what I was taught, what I learned on my own, what I learned from other people.”

That dream will take physical shape on Veterans Day at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., when a virtual dedication ceremony will unveil the multidimensional “Warriors’ Circle of Honor” memorial. “It took a while for this to really soak in – what this memorial actually means to all the Native American veterans,” Pratt says. “This memorial is for Native American veterans, but we invite all other veterans to come and be there with us.”

The primary challenge of the design, he says, was trying to find common threads among more than 573 known tribes, each of which is unique. “I’ve been with a lot of tribes in ceremonies, and I thought, you know, the way you touch everybody is through tradition and ceremonies. Most ceremonies involve the elements – water, fire, the earth and the air. And they are all sacred. And we know the directions are sacred. They say power comes from these different directions. Some tribes only recognize four. A lot of tribes recognize six directions. Some tribes recognize seven.” Each has a different meaning and color, from the red of the Southwest “where the creator comes from” to the yellow of the Northwest, for “Mother Earth ... she gives us the plants, the animals, the water, the vegetation,” Pratt explains. “That’s where we learn a lot of our traditions.”

The design employs water, fire, an eagle feather, a drum, cardinal points, a dedicated pathway and a lesson from Pratt’s grandfather. “I remember my grandfather saying, ‘Wear a circle, people. We go in a circle, and come back to ourselves, then go back around it.’ Path of life – the Plains people called it the ‘red road.’ In order to stay in harmony, you have to walk the red road. Sometimes you will get out, and the red road pulls you back to the middle. You might drift out a little bit and then come back in. So, I thought, I need a pathway. We will call it the path of life ... until you get into the area where the directions are, and you come inside where the drum is ... you come into harmony with all of those things.”

The construction process, Pratt says, has been more complicated than he expected after his design was chosen from a blind competition that involved pages of explanation, drawings, photographs and a studio-animated depiction of the finished site. “There are just a lot of people involved. You have to jump through hundreds and hundreds of hoops. They asked about the fire in my design in Washington. What kind of fire? What’s it being fed with? Is it propane? Is it gas? Is it natural gas? How do you put chemicals in it? What kind of color do you want in the fire? These are things you don’t really think about ... There must have been 20 architects on this project.”

That part in the journey will soon be over, and the designer’s dream will be deployed. “I want it to be a place where you are comforted, you are healed and you’re empowered. That’s what I think it’s going to be. It’s going to be a powerful place.”

And he hopes it will be powerful for generations to come. “Everybody will recognize this. My great-grandpa could come here and recognize these

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The Warriors' Circle of Honor, the National Native American Veterans Memorial, is dedicated at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian this month. Photo by Ben Mikesell

► See a video to learn the inspirations and motivations behind the design of the memorial, which employs sacred elements and an essential circle.

 legion.org/magazine

elements. Indians today will go in there and recognize these elements, the things that are in there, that make it theirs. My grandchildren's grandchildren will come and recognize these things. A lot of memorials have a statue or a sculpture, and it's World War I or World II, you know. But this is timeless. The circle is timeless."

In a sense, such has been the path for Harvey Pratt, who in recent years joined The American Legion and became commander of Cheyenne & Arapaho Post 401 in Clinton, Okla., where he and veterans from multiple tribes (along with one Cajun, R.D. Pratt) serve their community, honor military sacrifice and work to ensure that native veterans understand the benefits due to them.

"They are all dedicated," Pratt says of his fellow Post 401 Legionnaires. "They were all proud warriors."

And while none among them took the same route, they all share pride in service and a bond winding back to distant times that are not forgotten among them. "One of the questions I get asked the most is, 'Why do you Indians fight for this country, when this country treated native people so badly?' I say there's a couple of reasons. No. 1, it's a warrior society, a warrior culture. I was raised that way. You have to prepare yourself, be brave and not cry. You don't cry because you got hurt. You cry because your heart is broken, because you lost somebody. You learn to suck it up. I talked to some Navajo boys, and they told me, 'You suffer in silence.'


"The other thing is the Americas were like the Garden of Eden – nothing here but animals. And all of a sudden, man and woman showed up, and the creator gave the Americas to the Indians. So this land is Indian country. It is always Indian country, regardless of who owns it. That's what we fight for. Our blood is spilt all over this North American continent. Now our blood is spilt all over

the world, defending this country. That's why we fight for this land, and we fight for that flag. Indian people say things happened to us in the past. But this is still our land, and we fight for it. We fight for this country."

The journey of Harvey Pratt – who when he was chosen as a member of the Council of 44 Cheyenne peace chiefs in 1996 assumed the name White Thunder, in honor of his great-great-grandfather, the arrow keeper – has included almost continuous unexpected turns. Many of them he never fully understood until they were behind him, circling back to the day his grandfather gave him that first lump of clay, and even further, back to those born before him whose approval of his journey and memorial design matters more than anything to him. His grandfather told him long ago that life's little mysteries would come together in due time, like a circle connecting each generation to the other.

"My grandfather could do anything. He was an electrician, a carpenter and a plumber ... he was born in the 1870s. He would take us to the river to fish, and he would point and say, 'Dig right there.' You could dig right there, and there would be a soft-shell turtle. We'd take the turtle and put it into a gunnysack. We'd go somewhere else, and he'd say, 'Right there.' He'd take his staff and jam it in the sand, and he would hold it and say, 'Dig down there. There's a turtle right there.'

"I said, 'Grandpa, how did you know that?'"

"He said, 'Well, pay attention. One day, you will know. Just learn.' As I got older, I thought about that comment. It dawned on me that if you learn something yourself, it's yours. I finally figured it out. One day, I'll know. I tell my kids the same thing. They say, 'Dad, how did you do that?' I say, 'Pay attention and one day, you'll know.'" 

Jeff Stoffer is editor of The American Legion Magazine.



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After three days of rain in Michigan, the Tittabawasee River watershed overflowed May 20, leading to multiple dam failures. Waters from the Sanford dam, above, flooded much of the Midland area, including a Dow chemical complex and hundreds of homes and businesses. Getty

MAINTAIN OR DRAIN

Recent failures in Michigan underscore the stark choice facing private, state and federal dam owners.

BY KEN OLSEN

After two Michigan dams collapsed in May – inundating homes, businesses, and threatening a chemical plant and a Superfund site – a Columbia University research team warned the failures are a preview of coming disasters. A lot of them.

“Two dams down, a few thousand more to go,” Upmanu Lall and Paulina Concha Larrauri wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed days after the disaster.

There are more than 90,000 dams in the United States, many of which are old, poorly maintained, and vulnerable to large floods and earthquakes that weren’t taken into account when they were built decades ago. Some 15,600 are classified as high-hazard-potential dams, meaning people will probably be killed if the structure fails. And more

than 2,300 of these high-risk dams are in poor or unsatisfactory condition.

States reported 250 dam failures and 539 “incidents” where dams were at risk of failing between January 2010 and April 2020, according to the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO). That includes the 2015 collapse of the Semmes Lake Dam at Fort Jackson, S.C., that contributed to two deaths and caused millions of dollars in damage. In 2019, Vietnam War veteran Kenny Angel was swept away after Spencer Dam in Nebraska was breached. His body has never been recovered. Michigan’s dual dam failure was triggered by floodwaters overwhelming the Edenville Dam near Midland, sending a surge downstream that then took out Sanford Dam. The list goes on.

AMERICA REMEMBERS PRESENTS

THE VIETNAM VETERANS TRIBUTE COLT .45 PISTOL

FEATURING ARTWORK BY VIETNAM VETERAN AL ALEXANDER | LICENSED BY THE ARMY HISTORICAL FOUNDATION



To those who fought battles in the steaming jungles of Vietnam. To those who patrolled day and night, with threats of attack at every hour. To those who weathered the ambushes, the village mortar rounds and rifle fire. To those who patrolled the Mekong Delta in PBRs and flew in helicopters. To those in the fields and jungles always on the watch for punji sticks and explosives.

To those who returned home to a divided United States. To those who never returned home. To those who were glued to the nightly news, waiting for news of their father, or husband, or brother, or friend. To those who were drafted. To those who volunteered. To those who served. The Vietnam Veterans Tribute Colt .45 Pistol is dedicated to you.

For those who served in that faraway country, and for those who wish to honor them, this Tribute captures images from Vietnam that will be familiar to many of the veterans who courageously and honorably served in Vietnam when called by our country.

Al Alexander proudly served in the Vietnam War and this is reflected in the paintings he has created. His artwork is an especially fitting tribute to those who served in Vietnam, and those Americans who waited for them to come home. We are honored he has authorized America Remembers to issue this Tribute focused on his Vietnam War paintings.

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Nothing about the Vietnam War was easy. Those who were there remember swampy grasslands, rice paddies, dense

jungles, the heat and an elusive enemy; a war that took place halfway around the world in a country divided by decades of bitter history. They came from all over the country, from all walks of life, to fight for freedom on the other side of the world.

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The left side of the slide features four paintings of Al Alexander's: "Heavy Weight Contenders", "Delta Dragon Ship", "Red LZ" and "Lonely Point". You'll find tanks patrolling a jungle road, Huey helicopter dropping troops in a hot landing zone (a Red LZ), a point man on the lookout as he approaches a river crossing, and a patrol boat engaging the enemy on the river bank. Near the muzzle end, you'll find a banner reading, "Vietnam Veterans Tribute".



The right side features: "Another Day at the Office", "Double Trouble" and "Ringside for a Fast Mover". You'll find a helicopter gunner covering troops on the ground, personnel carriers with troops and helicopters overhead, and a Phantom dropping napalm as troops observe from a distance. You'll also find a banner reading "Lest We Forget, All Gave Some, Some Gave All", in honor of all who served in Vietnam.

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“We have a national infrastructure crisis,” Lall says. It’s a matter of time until there’s a catastrophic dam collapse that kills people and damages important downstream infrastructure such as bridges, highways, hospitals and water treatment plants. The bottom line, Lall and other experts say, is that the nation needs to provide more money to repair essential dams – and remove those that are no longer economically viable.

“The biggest thing is, if you can’t maintain it, you have to drain it,” says Charles Karpowicz, a dam safety engineer who worked for the National Park Service and the Army Corps of Engineers.

D-GRADED Dams have long powered U.S. factories, stored irrigation and drinking water, and made barge transportation possible on the Mississippi and other rivers. The Tennessee Valley Authority launched an ambitious dam-building program in the South in the 1930s to promote economic development. The dam-building spree in the Pacific Northwest’s Columbia River basin provided construction jobs during the Depression and electricity for the aluminum smelters and nuclear reactors that helped win World War II.

Cities such as Los Angeles and Las Vegas owe much of their existence to dam systems that capture and divert water hundreds of miles. Denver alone depends on approximately two dozen dams, says Del Shannon, senior vice president of Schnabel Engineering and vice president of the U.S. Society on Dams. But the nation isn’t taking care of these vital structures. “We put them in the ground and forget about them,” Shannon says. “And they are crumbling.”

The American Society of Civil Engineers has consistently given dams a “D” since issuing its first Infrastructure Report Card in 1998. The only change: the number of problem dams and the cost of fixing them has skyrocketed. Today, the Army Corps of Engineers estimates it needs \$19.6 billion to address its deficient dams. At the current investment rate, these repairs would take more than 50 years to complete, the Corps confirms. As sobering: the Corps is responsible for less than 1 percent of the nation’s dams. The cost of rehabilitating all of the known dam problems in the United States could exceed \$80 billion.

Public and private hydropower dams, including the pair that failed in Michigan, are licensed by the federal government. Every state except

Alabama also has its own dam safety program. California’s is considered one of the best. Yet dam experts were surprised by the 2017 spillway failure at the Oroville Dam, which at 770 feet is the nation’s tallest dam. Nearly 200,000 people were evacuated and the federal government paid more than \$1 billion for emergency repairs for something Lall says was preventable. An independent investigation of the Oroville incident concluded that the spillway defects – including problems with the concrete and the underlying bedrock – were known almost as soon as the dam was completed in 1968 and accepted as an issue that merely required ongoing repairs.

Meanwhile, there is increasing development downstream from dams. That means structures that were built in the middle of nowhere – and therefore considered low-risk – have since become high-hazard-potential dams.

More than half the nation’s dams are privately owned. The owners, which include municipalities and public utilities, are responsible for safety and upkeep. That’s a big challenge because a private entity – say, the homeowners association for a lakeside development – may not make money from the dam associated with the project, says Mark Ogden, a civil engineer with ASDSO.

It can also be difficult to get owners to do the necessary work on dams designed with a revenue stream in mind, Ogden says. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission revoked Boyce Hydro’s license to operate the Edenville Dam in September 2018 after years of unsuccessfully trying to get the owner to upgrade its dams.

After the dams collapsed, the principal owner filed for bankruptcy, blaming regulators for the problems, according to the news website Michigan Live. But others think dam regulations were too lax. “From what I know, regulators and politicians are too lenient on dam owners,” Karpowicz says. “There are thousands of unsafe dams that should be removed because the owners have not repaired them in a timely fashion.”

REMOVAL More and more unprofitable or outdated dams are being removed, says Boise-based hydropower economist Tony Jones, who worked for two Republican Idaho governors and the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. “Dams are like any tool. They get old. And when a private utility decides to get rid of an asset such as a dam, it’s a sign something is truly wrong with it.”

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60-64	\$18.50	\$13.75	\$30.17	\$22.25	\$59.33	\$43.50	\$146.83	\$107.25
65-69	\$22.08	\$17.05	\$36.13	\$27.75	\$71.25	\$54.50	\$176.63	\$134.75
70-74	\$29.53	\$22.30	\$48.54	\$36.50	\$96.08	\$72.00	\$238.71	\$178.50
75-79	\$38.65	\$30.70	\$63.75	\$50.50	\$126.50	\$100.00	\$314.75	\$248.50
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Steve Pettit, a Vietnam War veteran and former Idaho Fish and Game biologist, is fighting for the removal of four dams on the Lower Snake River dams in eastern Washington to save wild salmon and steelhead from extinction.

Photo courtesy Steve Pettit

More than 1,700 U.S. dams have been taken out since 1912, most in the past 30 years, according to the nonprofit American Rivers. The world's largest project involved removing the Elwha and Glines Canyon dams in Olympic National Park in 2011 and 2014, respectively. Elsewhere, PacifiCorp has been removing four of its Klamath River dams in southern Oregon and northern California. In recent years, the company has taken out dams on Oregon's Sandy and Hood rivers as well as the White Salmon River in Washington state. In many cases, dam owners conclude it's less expensive to remove the dam than add fish ladders and make other changes required to relicense the facilities.

In fact, fish issues and economics fuel one of the most high-profile dam controversies in the western United States. Steve Pettit has fought for removal of the four Lower Snake River dams in eastern Washington and northern Idaho since soon after he returned from a 13-month tour as a helicopter gunship pilot in Vietnam and enrolled in graduate school at the University of Idaho. He continued that battle during his 32-year career as a fisheries biologist for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

The dams, opposed by the Eisenhower administration, were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s by the Corps of Engineers with the promise of turning Lewiston, Idaho, into a thriving inland seaport 465 miles from the Pacific Ocean.

"I read the transcripts from the congressional hearings in the '40s and '50s," Pettit says.

"Proponents said Lewiston would become the size of Seattle. Fishery experts testified that if all four dams were completed, salmon and steelhead would be extinct within 40 to 50 years."

The economic boom faded after dam construction was completed, and Lewiston has the lowest economic growth rate of any city in Idaho since the 1970s, Jones says. Wild salmon and steelhead are on the cusp of extinction because of the toll dams take on the fish, particularly young smolts migrating to the ocean where they spend up to five years before returning to the place they were born to spawn.

"The only chance these fish have is for the four Lower Snake River dams to come out," Pettit says. Wild salmon returned to the Elwha River six months after the dams were removed, he adds, and have returned to other Pacific Northwest rivers after dams were removed.

Before the 20th-century dam-building spree began, the Columbia-Snake system produced 16 million to 20 million chinook, coho, sockeye and chum salmon – more than any other watershed in the world. The Snake River, largest tributary to the Columbia River, produced nearly half of those fish. Chinook salmon swam all the way to northeastern Nevada, where they fed miners trying to strike the mother lode during the 1800s. There were even two salmon canneries in Weiser, Idaho, near Boise, Jones says.

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Now, “the wild runs are circling the toilet bowl of extinction,” Pettit says. “Some are down to a hundred fish. Wild sockeye is a museum piece.”

Fishing guides and communities along the Snake and Clearwater rivers are struggling. “A study 15 years ago showed bringing salmon and steelhead back to Idaho is worth \$300 million a year,” Pettit says. “It’s a great loss to the economy of these small river towns.”

Third-generation fishing guide Toby Wyatt of Clarkston, Wash., says at some point he expects he’ll have to find a new line of work as wild salmon and steelhead disappear. And while he supports dam removal and other changes to help wild fish, he also says the region’s hydro complex has become part of the landscape and an important source of jobs.

Pettit’s other concern: an enormous amount of silt that was carried downriver before the Lower Granite Dam was built now settles at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater near Lewiston, raising the river level and increasing the odds that a major flood would overtop levees and inundate the city. “If we had a flood like we had in 1974 – or larger – there would be 3 feet of water in downtown,” Pettit says.

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), which markets electricity from the Northwest’s federal hydropower dams and is responsible for covering the costs of the turbines and other power infrastructure, has spent \$16 billion unsuccessfully attempting to restore wild salmon and steelhead and strongly opposes dam removal. But Jones says the economic case for taking out the Lower Snake River dams is overwhelming. The amount of wheat and wood products shipped by river barge from Lewiston to the West Coast has declined, and half of the power generated by the four lower Snake dams is produced from March to June when it’s not needed for winter heating or summer air conditioning.

The four dams are among the most expensive to operate in the BPA system, and three of the four will need turbine replacements in the coming years that could cost \$1 billion, Jones says. “If the four Lower Snake River dams were run by a private company, they would get a backhoe up there today and tear them down. Every minute you keep them is a hole in your balance sheet.”

He adds, “Why would you let salmon go extinct for dams that aren’t competitive even without the fish recovery cost?”

BPA is the most heavily leveraged utility in the country. Its hydropower rates can’t compete with less expensive solar and wind power, Jones says. And when their power contracts expire in 2028, many may not reup with BPA, forcing the agency to raise its rates and potentially lose more customers.

BPA says these assertions are inaccurate. The Lower Snake River dams are profitable and among BPA’s lowest-cost power sources, says Doug Johnson, senior BPA spokesman. And although the dams’ turbines are nearing the end of their design life, BPA does not plan to replace them as long as they remain in good condition – a cost-saving practice that has worked well at other area dams.

“When people continue to mischaracterize the costs associated with, and the value of, the hydropower generated by the lower Snake River Dams, it does not advance the conversation about where these facilities fit into the Northwest’s economic and environmental future,” Johnson says.

COMING FAILURE Although he believes the economic and scientific case for taking out the Snake dams is indisputable, Pettit doubts the issue will be resolved in time to save the remaining wild salmon. “When I started fly fishing, I caught 400 to 500 steelhead a year,” says Pettit, who releases his fish back to the river. “Last year I caught two. I doubt I’ll even buy a steelhead tag this year.”

Meanwhile, dam experts worry that the public attention and support for funding adequate dam maintenance will fade despite the fatal dam failures and near-misses in recent years. “I hope the incidents that recently occurred in Michigan will raise awareness,” Ogden says. “History shows it will lose momentum.”

Karpowicz agrees. “We should expect we’ll be seeing more dam failures.” 🌿

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

DAM AWARENESS

In addition to the danger posed by dam failures, some 50 people drown in fishing, boating and swimming accidents each year because of safety problems at dams, many of them abandoned. Learn more about dam safety issues in your region at damsafety.org.

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THE COLDEST BATTLE

*In one of his last interviews,
Korean War veteran
Charlie Gebhardt recalls
the “frozen Chosin.”*

BY ROBERT RANDALL RYDER

Growing up on Chicago’s West Side, Charles “Charlie” Gebhardt thought he knew how brutally cold winter could be. But the Army sergeant changed his mind after fighting in the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in Korea, where he endured temperatures 35 degrees below zero.

“My feet were like balls of lead,” said Gebhardt, a 21-year member of Boone American Legion Post 77 in Belvidere, Ill. “My fingers were turning black. You can’t imagine how cold it was.”

Freezing weather was only one of the hardships facing Gebhardt in November 1950, during the first year of the war. Months before, North Korean troops invaded South Korea without provocation. In response, a coalition of South Korean and U.N. forces led by the United States retook much of the lost territory and turned the tide in South Korea’s favor. Many thought the “police action” would be over by Christmas, with the two halves of the country reunited under democratic rule.

Everything changed in October, though, when communist China, which borders North Korea, entered the war. On Nov. 27, close to 120,000

Charlie Gebhardt served at the Pusan perimeter and the invasion of Inchon before his unit, the 31st Regimental Combat Team, was sent east of the Chosin Reservoir to relieve Marines trying to rejoin their division. He and his fellow soldiers survived below-zero temperatures and attacks from Chinese troops. Photo courtesy Charles Gebhardt family

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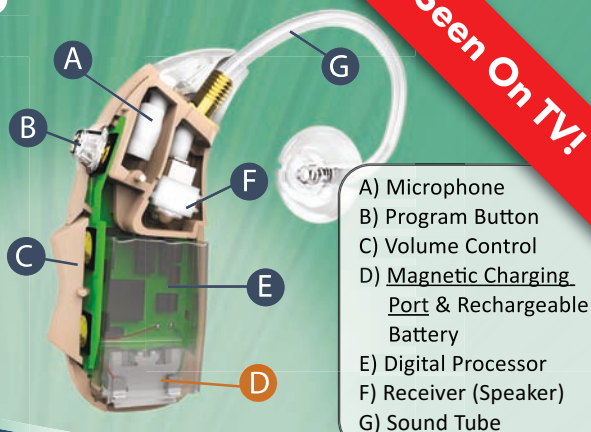
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Chinese troops encircled and attacked U.S. Marine Corps and Army units near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. This was the start of a unrelenting 17-day battle fought in some of the coldest conditions of the war, resulting in nearly 2,500 U.S. troops killed in action, 5,000 wounded and another 8,000 who suffered from frostbite.

"I got up there on Nov. 27, 10 a.m., 3 miles north of the inlet, and we got hit at 8:15 that night by the Chinese," Gebhardt recalled. "The Chinese had warned us. They didn't want us messing with those reservoirs."

Gebhardt, who was attending Officer Candidate School when the Korean War broke out, served as an intelligence and planning specialist with the Army's 7th Infantry Division, 29th Infantry Regiment (later, 32nd Infantry Regiment). He believed the American forces were caught off guard by the intensity of the Chinese attack and reacted the best they could in a chaotic situation.

"We were thrown in at the last second, 2,389 Army guys and 700 South Korean kids who were grabbed off the street," Gebhardt said. "We were short two infantry battalions and a brigade of artillery. It was such a helter-skelter operation."

Surrounded and outnumbered, the American units organized a fighting retreat toward an evacuation seaport, marching 70 miles through treacherous mountains on an unpaved road. This was the only retreat route available to U.S. forces, and the Chinese were waiting for them.

"I kept people moving," Gebhardt said. "I got guys together to try to break the roadblocks the Chinese set up. There was no communication with the outside world, except for a Marine captain who called in air support."

Provided by Marine Corps fighter-bombers, that air support proved crucial, inflicting heavy casualties on Chinese troops and giving the retreating soldiers and Marines an opportunity to make it to safety.

Gebhardt had no choice but to take his situation hour by hour and minute by minute.

"I was just trying to survive the moment," he said. "The Chinese had us surrounded and we were outnumbered 10 to one. We were fighting the impossible. Death was always there. You were always next."



"I tell my story to help remember the ones who didn't come home, or who came home in coffins," Gebhardt told Northwest Quarterly in 2015. "It's not about me, it's about them." Photo courtesy Charles Gebhardt family

The rifles' lubricating oil froze, rendering them useless. Batteries in jeeps, trucks and radios wouldn't work properly and quickly ran down. Medical supplies, including blood plasma, froze too. Morphine syrettes used for painful wounds had to be defrosted in medics' mouths before they could be injected. Frostbite caused more casualties among U.S. troops than enemy fire.

For Gebhardt, the cold was punishing, but he survived it. "I had a good winter jacket, and I was told to always have a pair of socks under your armpits," he said. "That really helped. I had a sweater and heavy socks. But we just had combat jeans (pants) and regular combat

boots (instead of winter boots). It was just cold, very cold. It was never warm enough."

After days of fighting, the Army and Marine units safely made it out. But because of the freezing conditions, many wounded were left behind.

"We walked across the ice and got to the Marines, and a Marine colonel chastised us for leaving our wounded," Gebhardt said. "I got into a warming tent, recovered from the cold and tried to organize a way to rescue those left behind with some trucks. An officer said, 'If you get some men who are nuts enough to go with you, I'll supply the trucks and drivers.' So, I found 46 nuts who were willing to go back, and we rescued 84 men who were in bad shape. They were wounded or frozen. Their wounds were unattended."

For that rescue mission, which in all likelihood saved the lives of those 84 men, Gebhardt was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

The battle took its toll on Gebhardt, however. He collapsed from pneumonia and exhaustion and was evacuated by plane Dec. 4 to a rear area, where he eventually recovered.

Asked what he remembers most about the battle, he didn't hesitate: the high price his unit paid in casualties. "Only 385 out of 2,389 Army GIs escaped the battle without being killed, wounded, surrendered or missing in action," he said. "Only three officers remained (out of more than 100)."

Gebhardt's Korean War was far from over. He was wounded in March 1951 when shrapnel from a mortar round pierced his right hand.

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"I was outside a command post in South Korea and raised my hand instinctively to protect myself and was wounded," he said. "No big deal. They put a small bandage on it." Because he never reported the wound, he never received a Purple Heart.

Gebhardt received a battlefield promotion to second lieutenant, and later to captain. He returned to the United States in July 1951 but was back in Korea a year later, working at air fields K-14 in Kimpo and K-16 in Seoul with the 811th Engineer Aviation Battalion. He left active duty upon coming home in 1953.

Gebhardt returned to the Chicagoland area, where he worked for Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad as a switchman, conductor and yardmaster. He earned a degree and became a leader in the United Transportation Union.

In 1970, Gebhardt married his wife, Linnea, and they had two children, John and Julie. He was active in the Belvidere community and served in an honor guard for veteran burials. "I've had a good life," he said. "The whole thing has been a good life."

When telling others about the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir, Gebhardt's eyes lit up and his voice grew strong. "The Army was there!" he said. "The Marines weren't the only ones who were there."

For the rest of his life, Gebhardt held close his memories of fighting in the "forgotten war."

"Yes, I had to put up with a lot of combat, but I got through it because I had so many great people beside me," he said. "I don't care about the awards and decorations that much. The only badge I really respect is the Combat Infantry Badge. I'd do it all again, because of my band of brothers." 🌿

Robert Randall Ryder is a Marine Corps veteran who served in Operation Desert Storm. He writes about military history for local and national magazines.

Editor's note: Charles "Charlie" Gebhardt died Dec. 25, 2019, and is buried at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elmwood, Ill.



Photo courtesy Calvin Walker

'Where the excitement was'

When Calvin Walker went to war in 1952, he was 20 – "old enough to get shot at, but not old enough to vote," he says.

He'd been mining coal in Kentucky when the draft notice came. He took a bus from Madisonville to an armory in Owensboro, where he was sworn into the Army. At 5 o'clock the next morning, while boarding a train to Fort Meade, Walker glanced out the window and was surprised to see his father standing near the tracks.

"He came to see me off," he says, tears filling his eyes.

That spring, Walker traveled by troop ship to Japan, and then Korea. At Inchon, climbing down a rope ladder to a landing craft that would take him ashore, he finally started to feel afraid. "When they hand you a rifle, different clothes and a bulletproof vest, you get to thinking, 'Well, hey now, what's going on here?'"

Assigned to 2nd Infantry Division, 9th Regiment, Heavy Mortar Company, Walker spent 10 months on the front line, moving from one attack to another. "I was right where the excitement was," whether that was a gun pit, exposed to the elements and incoming rounds, or the fire direction center, a sandbag bunker 4 feet thick, he says.

"Sometimes it could last all night and day, and you'd just keep firing. Sometimes the mortar tube would get so hot we'd have to wet sandbags to wrap around it to keep the round from firing too soon."

Accustomed to the sight of litter jeeps and helicopters transporting the wounded to field hospitals, Walker's hardest moments came after the arrival of three letters from his mother, telling him that his younger brother, Carroll, had died in a car accident.

"The company commander sent his jeep to come get me so I could talk to the chaplain," he says. "I was thankful it was a quiet day."

A 68-year member of American Legion Post 6 in Madisonville, Walker visits schools to tell students about the "forgotten war," in which 36,574 Americans gave their lives for Korean freedom. He also wears his Army uniform in parades, proud to represent the 5.7 million men and women who served in uniform during the Korean War.

As a member of Post 6's honor guard, Walker has participated in more than 850 military funerals, and plans to continue as long as his health allows. "I like to say, 'I'd rather wear out than rust out.'"

– Matt Grills

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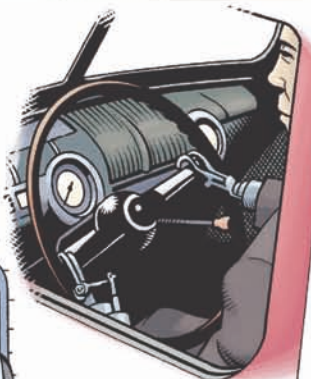
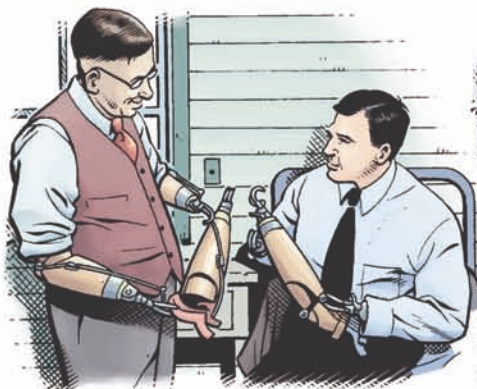
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TEAMMATES INCLUDE "MAC" AND HIS WIFE PEARL, AND "TONY" AND HIS FELLOW NEW YORKER HERMAN. CHARLES "MAC" MCGONEGAL LOST BOTH HANDS TO A GRENADE IN FRANCE IN 1918. WALTER "TONY" ANTONIEWIEZ LOST HIS LEGS IN WORLD WAR I, AS DID HERMAN PHEFFER IN WORLD WAR II. PEARL'S ROLE IS TO HELP FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE VETERANS HANDLE THE ADJUSTMENT.

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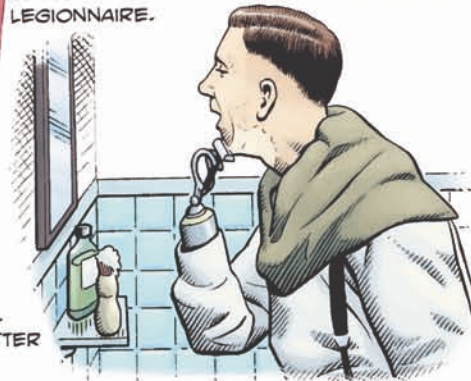


MCGONEGAL HAS BY THIS TIME BECOME WIDELY KNOWN AS AN EVANGELIST FOR ALL ONE CAN DO WITH PROSTHETICS.

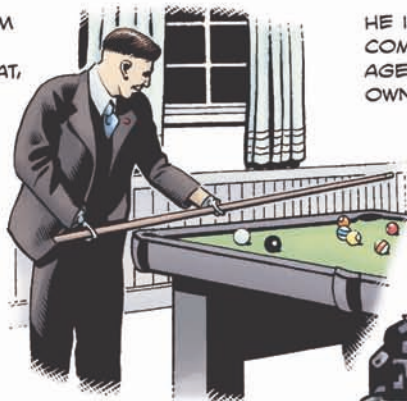


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HE IS AN AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER IN 1960 WHEN HE DIES AT AGE 64, HAVING "DEMONSTRATED BY HIS OWN LIFE," ACCORDING TO HIS OBITUARY...



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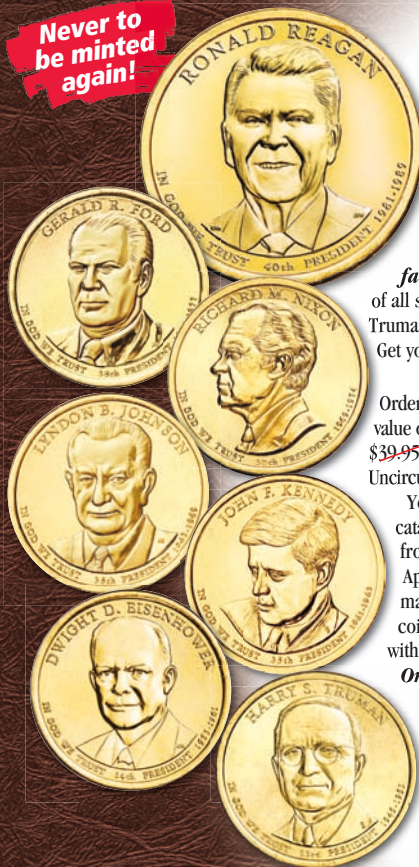
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The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial is located in a newly created public park, adjacent to the National Mall and across the street from the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. Photos courtesy Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

'WE GOT IT RIGHT'

Twenty years in the making, a new national memorial tells the story of the iconic general turned commander in chief.



“In this memorial we see the coming of age of Eisenhower, and America, embodied in the dreams of a young man. Just as Eisenhower left Abilene at 20 to go to West Point, and later selected to be the supreme allied commander during World War II, and then president of the United States, America too was transitioning from humble beginnings to global leadership, and Ike led the way.”

Kansas Sen. Pat Roberts, chairman,
Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial in Washington, D.C., is open to the public after a 20-year wait, inviting Americans to reflect anew on the legacy of the great soldier-statesman.

To many, he's the general who led 160,000 Allied troops in the D-Day invasion that began the liberation of Europe in World War II. To others, "Ike" is the popular two-term president who created the nation's current infrastructure, established NASA and the FAA, laid the groundwork for civil rights and fought the spread of communism.

The capital's newest memorial presents a unified portrait of Eisenhower, the man from Abilene, Kan., who applied the lessons of West Point on the battlefield and in the White House, who was both a leader and public servant, who didn't seek the political life but answered his country's call.

Congress commissioned a permanent memorial to Eisenhower in 1999, but agreement on its design and scope took time – and compromise.

"We persevered, and then we persevered, and then we got it right," Sen. Pat Roberts, chairman of the Eisenhower Memorial Commission, told guests at the Sept. 17 unveiling.

Designed by architect Frank Gehry, the memorial combines different art forms to trace Eisenhower's journey from Midwestern boy to beloved general to visionary president. Bronze sculptures by Sergey Eylanbekov include a young Eisenhower, seated, gazing toward his future – at one end of the plaza, the general addresses his men before D-Day, and at the other the president stands with advisers in front of a world map. Above each scene, stirring words from Eisenhower are etched in limestone.

CONTINUED ON **PAGE 48**

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46

Framing it all is a first-of-its-kind stainless-steel tapestry by artist Tomas Osinski. Eighty feet high and 480 feet long, it depicts the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc on Normandy's coastline in peacetime, symbolizing the sacrifice to liberate Europe and save Western democracy.

The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the dedication, originally set for May 8, the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe (V-E) Day. Even so, several speakers delivered their remarks virtually, including Bob Dole, former Kansas senator and World War II veteran, and Condoleezza Rice, former secretary of state and national security adviser.

Dole, now 97, fought with the Army's 10th Mountain Division, receiving two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star. In a recorded greeting, he praised Eisenhower's honesty, integrity and decisiveness.

"He spent much of his time trying to reconcile the interests of the British and the French and the Americans, but he did it with expertise," Dole said. "He kept everybody on board, and because of his brilliant approach we won World War II. I'm proud to call Gen. Eisenhower, President Eisenhower, my hero."

Rice, who was born the year after Eisenhower took office, recalled her father's pride in casting his vote for Ike. Her parents and their friends desired to be treated as first-class citizens in America, and sought justice, she said; they saw in Eisenhower a person who sought justice too.

"None of us will ever forget that it was President Eisenhower who protected young Black children as they tried finally to deliver on the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* and to integrate segregated schools in Little Rock, Ark. That was an act befitting a leader."

David Eisenhower shared a favorite story about his grandfather, from 1954, when Eisenhower was scheduled to give a commencement address at Penn State, where his brother Milton was president. Thousands were gathering for the outdoor event, but rain threatened. "You can picture the scene of worry in the president's house as Milton is on the phone and he is pacing the living room. At one point, Dwight Eisenhower remarks, 'Milton, since June 6, 1944, I have never worried about the rain.'"

In a recorded message, Susan Eisenhower thanked everyone who donated to the memorial, and described her experience researching and writing "How Ike Led: The Principles Behind Eisenhower's Biggest Decisions," released in August.

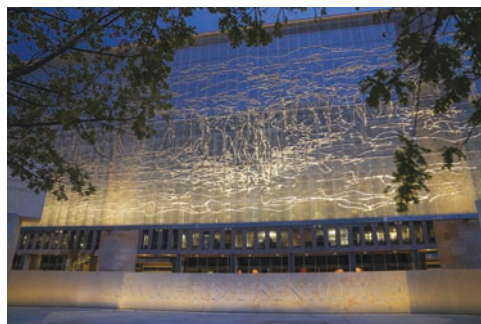
"I was astonished to see how many things I didn't know, but also to see this enormous alliance between the person I knew and the person who is depicted in the history books," she said. "I was impressed by his grasp of human nature, his belief in our country and his commitment to serve the Constitution of the United States He was trusted by the American people, and his 'middle way' presidential approach to politics assured that his administration could serve all segments of American society. He held together, during vast technological and social change, a fractious and frightened America."

A life member of American Legion Post 39 in Abilene, Eisenhower was awarded the organization's Distinguished Service Medal in 1945. As president, he signed legislation establishing Veterans Day as a national holiday and supported The American Legion's "Back to God" campaign.

In 2015, The American Legion passed a resolution endorsing the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial, provided its design was acceptable to the Eisenhower family.

"They stood squarely with us, and can certainly take credit for providing that important support," Susan Eisenhower said. "Everybody agrees that what we finally came up with, and that's all parties concerned ... the result is better. It only goes to show what people of good will can do if they come together and continue to work on something."

— Matt Grills



TOP: Paratroopers listen to Gen. Eisenhower as they prepare to go into battle.

MIDDLE: A stainless-steel tapestry depicts the cliffs of the Normandy coastline at peacetime.

BOTTOM: A young Dwight Eisenhower gazes into his future. Photos courtesy Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission

Watch the dedication of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial:

 facebook.com/eisenhowermemorial

Go online for an audio tour, pivotal moments in Eisenhower's career, lesson plans and more:

 eisenhowermemorial.gov



Ron O'Neal displays an American Legion watch that belonged to his father, Army veteran and Legionnaire Nolan O'Neal. Photo courtesy Ron O'Neal

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

eBay shopper reunites family with American Legion watch

Danny Powell calls his discovery “a needle in a million haystacks.”

A frequent eBay shopper, Powell came across a rather unusual gold watch with a black leather band while on the auction website. On the watch's front, the American Legion emblem appeared with the words “past post commander,” and on the back, the inscription read “Nolan O'Neal” and “Post 159.”

“The watch is the most memorable and the most personal item I have ever seen on eBay,” says Powell, an Army veteran and chaplain of Clayton County American Legion Post 258 in Jonesboro, Ga. “It's a rarity.” He won it for 99 cents plus \$4 shipping.

Powell then played the role of detective. He found O'Neal's obituary online and reached out to Earl Graham American Legion Post 159 in Bryan, Texas, via Facebook and the post website. Before long, he was connected with Ron O'Neal, Nolan's son.

Ron says the watch, jewelry and other personal items were misplaced or stolen years ago when his father was in a memory care unit; O'Neal died in 2016. “When (Powell) sent me pictures of the watch, it was absolutely a shock,” he says.

Powell estimates that he has purchased about 500 items from eBay over the past 15 years. “I just love the American Legion story,” he says, “and I collect American Legion magazines. But most of the things I collect, I collect to give away.”

The watch is indeed the most memorable purchase he has made.

“That man was a hero,” Powell says. “For him to be victimized at the most vulnerable time of his life, at the end of his life – it meant a lot to me to get that watch back to his son.”

Ron adds, “Dad wore this watch to church, military events and other important gatherings. It meant so much to him because of his camaraderie with those men and women in Post 159. It means a lot to us.”

An Army Ranger, O'Neal was commissioned during the Vietnam War and received numerous awards, including the Silver Star. After retiring, he joined Post 159, where he served as commander and led the honor guard, participating in more than 100 veteran funerals.

“The members are incredible in how they care for and look out for each other,” Ron says. “It really didn't surprise me, but it did impress me, that another American Legion member would pick up on the significance of a watch like that on eBay and go to those lengths to return it.”

— Henry Howard

EDUCATION

Course failure and GI Bill benefits



Q: My dad transferred his Post-9/11 Chapter 33 educational benefits to me. I am enrolled in 15 credits and doing well in most of my classes, but I am having problems with college algebra this semester. I am not sure if I will pass my class. What will happen with my education benefits since I am failing my course?

A: It is important to understand the school's catalog and what will happen if you do not pass the class. It may state that you must earn a certain grade to pass the class. For instance, if you receive a grade of D but must have C, and it clearly states in the catalog you must have a grade of C or higher, VA will pay for that class again since you did not meet the minimum grade required for that class.

Remember, if you drop the course and receive a nonpunitive grade, VA may send you a debt letter for dropping the class. Tutoring is also available through VA. Speak to your school counselor to receive more information regarding options to pass the course.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Apache Junction, Ariz. askvalerie@legion.org

VERBATIM

The fiscal path over the coming decades is unsustainable.

Phillip Swagel, director of the Congressional Budget Office, reporting that federal spending, currently 21 percent of gross domestic product, will rise to 31 percent by 2050, with most of that increase coming from interest payments on the rising debt. Federal debt held by the public will reach 100 percent next year. Source: *The Washington Times*



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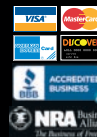
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RAPID FIRE



Photo courtesy GovernmentCIO

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

VA expands digital capabilities of Veterans Legacy Memorial

The National Cemetery Administration has enhanced and expanded the capabilities of its Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) website – va.gov/remember – for family, friends and visitors to leave tributes or comments on a veteran's memorial page. VLM is the nation's first digital platform dedicated entirely to the preservation of the memory of the 3.7 million veterans interred in VA national cemeteries.

"Online memorialization becomes more prominent these days, allowing people to remotely honor the service and sacrifice of our veterans," says VA Undersecretary for Memorial Affairs Randy Reeves. "The increased capabilities of VLM are in place at a critical time to ensure 'No Veteran Ever Dies' by telling their stories to a larger audience through an enhanced digital platform. In addition, VLM allows people to express their appreciation and gratitude for the dedicated service of our nation's heroes."

After creating an account on the website, visitors can leave a tribute to a veteran important to them, choose from an auto-generated list at the bottom of the page, or conduct a simple search based on name, service branch, war period or cemetery.

Tributes can be made as a direct entry on a veteran's page, a reply to someone else's tribute on a veteran's page, or as a direct entry to a memento or photos on a veteran's page.

Once a tribute is reviewed and posted, visitors can share their posts to Facebook or Twitter. Users can also "like" a comment or image by pressing a small heart-shaped button.

All tributes are reviewed by VLM administrators before posting, to ensure consistency with the dignity and decorum of a VA national cemetery.

VA operates 150 national cemeteries and 34 soldiers' lots and monument sites in 41 states and Puerto Rico. For veterans not buried in VA national cemeteries, VA provides headstones, markers or medallions to commemorate their service.

Information on VA burial benefits is available from local VA national cemetery offices, online at va.gov/burials-memorials or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at **800-827-1000**.

To make burial arrangements at any open VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at **800-535-1117**.

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After just one trip around your home in the Zoomer, you'll marvel at how easy it is to navigate. It is designed to maneuver in tight spaces like doorways, between furniture, and around corners. It can go over thresholds and works great on any kind of floor or carpet. It's not bulky or cumbersome, so it can roll right up to a table or desk- there's no need to transfer to a chair. Its sturdy yet lightweight aluminum frame makes it durable and comfortable. It's dual motors power it at up to 3.7 miles per hour and its automatic electromagnetic brakes stop on a dime. The rechargeable battery powers it for up to



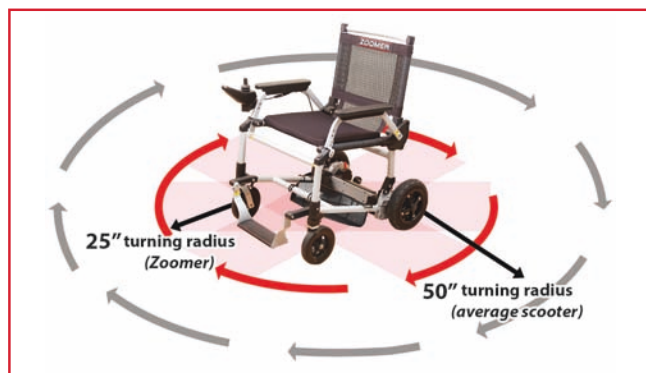
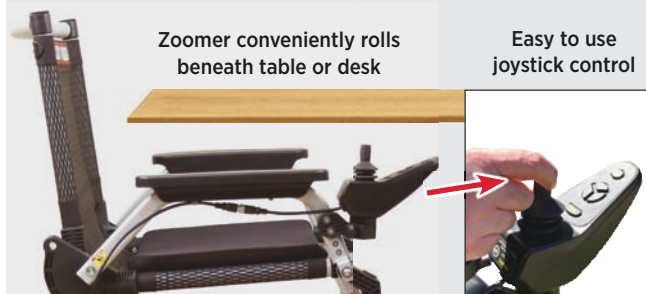
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Russian homesteaders

Hoping to encourage its people to populate the Arctic, the Russian government is planning to offer citizens plots of land in the Arctic free of charge to build homes and launch businesses, Reuters reports.

Under the plan, Moscow would initially offer Russians currently living in the Arctic “up to one hectare of land for free to build a home or use for business, such as tourism.” After six months, the government would open up the offer to all Russians. The proposal has not yet been approved by Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

ECONOMY

A post-pandemic baby bust

Researchers at the Brookings Institution conclude that COVID-19 “will likely lead to a large, lasting baby bust ... on the order of 300,000 to 500,000 fewer births next year” in the United States.

Importantly, the looming drop in births is not a function of COVID-19’s toll on women of childbearing age. “COVID-19 is not having a large impact on the mortality of people of childbearing age,” the researchers note. “Only 1 percent of COVID-19 deaths reported so far in the U.S. are among the under-35s.” Moreover, COVID-19 has killed far more men than women.

The researchers cite the dramatic economic collapse and consequent economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic as the prime cause for the baby-bust forecast.



Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, 96th Aviation Support Battalion unfold the blades of an AH-64 Apache helicopter July 11 in La Rochelle, France. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin Northcutt

DEFENSE

Return to a Cold War-era port

The Army is again using the port of La Rochelle in western France to transit soldiers onto the European continent.

As *Stars and Stripes* reports, the port was used during the Cold War. Recent months have seen U.S. Army personnel and helicopters deploy to and through La Rochelle en route to defensive operations on NATO’s eastern flank. Dozens of Chinook, Black Hawk and Apache helicopters have moved from the port to Latvia, Poland and Germany as part of a nine-month rotation in Eastern Europe.

“The port is vital to the reception, staging and onward movement of the 101st CAB (Combat Aviation Brigade) from the U.S. to the European continent,” according to U.S. Army-Europe. “Using La Rochelle Port strengthens the France-U.S. bilateral relationship by providing increased military mobility for the collective defense of Europe.”

EDUCATION

America’s homeschooling boom

Ten months into the pandemic, as governors, school boards and principals continue to struggle balancing public health and public education, interest in homeschooling is surging.

“There were about 2.5 million homeschool students last year in grades K-12 in the U.S., making up about 3 percent to 4 percent of school-age children,” according to The Associated Press (AP). Brian Ray, president of the National Home Educators Research Institute, projects those numbers will jump by at least 10 percent in 2020-2021.

Already, Nebraska has seen a 21 percent increase in homeschooling applications, Vermont has seen a 75 percent jump, and online homeschool filings were so large in North Carolina that they crashed the government’s website.

“The National Home School Association received more than 3,400 requests for information on a single day ... up from between five and 20 inquiries per day before the coronavirus,” AP adds.

“One day the school district says X, and four days later they say Y,” Ray told AP. “And then the governor says another thing, and then that changes what the school district can do. And parents and teachers are tired of what appear to be arbitrary and capricious decisions. They are tired of it and saying, ‘We are out of here.’”

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PERSONAL FINANCE



Is now the right time to buy a new vehicle?

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

As we enter what is traditionally one of the top times of the year for buying a new vehicle, it's hard for the average person to figure out if the pandemic has created a real buying opportunity or thrown up a big stop sign.

Several trends have emerged. First, and not surprisingly, more people are interested in driving their own vehicle

as opposed to using more public-oriented transportation options. According to *Auto News*, 93 percent are using their personal vehicles more than pre-pandemic. And while not as nimble as having a pair of shoes delivered to your doorstep, vehicle "distance-shopping" trends have emerged: digital showrooms, online configuration tools and at-home test drives, to name a few.

Is now a good time to buy, though? The year's-end rollout of new models and dealers' desire to lighten pandemic-bloated inventories could lead to downward pressure on vehicle prices. However, like the answer to similar timing questions, the real answer lies in your own situation.

■ **Is it a need or a want?** You may have heard the story of the shopper who went broke buying things on sale. This cautionary tale hasn't resonated with my kids, but it's worth considering as you ponder a potential vehicle purchase. With so much uncertainty, I'd fight the urge to outfit yourself with new wheels just because it looks like a good deal. In good times or bad, cars tend to depreciate.

■ **Does it fit my budget?** Obviously, that's a question that will vary based on your situation and if you're like millions of Americans, you may have run into some financial challenges in 2020. If your job situation is solid and you can cap all your transportation costs at 10 percent of your gross income, you should be on track. That includes gas, maintenance, insurance

and the like. That's probably a lot less than many spend, but my goal is for you to have less financial stress and more flexibility, especially today.

■ **Can I get a competitive interest rate loan?** Over the years, I've run into a lot of people with double-digit interest rate car loans. That might have been reasonable in 1985, but it's not acceptable in today's extremely low interest rate environment. That's especially true with all the manufacturer financing offers available today. If your credit history keeps you from qualifying for anything but that type of loan, you should buy nothing but bare-bones transportation while you work to bump up your score.

■ **How long will I be paying?** Remember, the longer the term of your loan, the more you rack up in interest and the more likely you'll be upside-down. Yes, that means the eight-year loan you're looking at in order to squeeze too much car into your budget is a bad idea, even if it's low-to-no interest. Shoot for a loan of five years or less.

■ **Does this vehicle fit my lifestyle?** Earlier this year – and, thankfully, we didn't pull the trigger – my wife told me she was ready to turn in her SUV in for a sporty new coupe. Within the next half-hour, we were discussing our plans to go pick up our grandkids and all of their stuff for a weekend with us. There's enough room for only one coupe in this house, and my paid-for vehicle is it. The point? Buy something you can drive for an extended period of time, not something you'll quickly regret.

So, to finish with an answer to the question we began with: a new car may be a good idea, but only if it makes sense in the context of everything else going on with your life and finances.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances

GIVING

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Now is a perfect opportunity to make American Legion Charities Inc. your charitable organization of choice on AmazonSmile.

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Go to **smile.amazon.com**, sign in to your normal account, and type in "American Legion Charities Inc." in the search box. Amazon will remember your selection, and every eligible purchase you make will result in a donation.



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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

Nuclear Wpns Technician Assn, Tucson, AZ, 9/16-18, Janice Miller, (325) 640-1854, garjans@suddenlink.net

ARMY

3rd Plt 501st MP (Bamberg, Germany), 30-Year Gulf War Reunion, San Diego, 6/19, Robert Howard, (407) 412-1443, ehoward305@yahoo.com; **3rd Sqdn 4th Cav Assn**, Herndon, VA, 4/21-25, Dave Cox, (830) 895-1172, cox.a.34cav@gmail.com

JOINT

Khe Sanh Veterans Assn, Albuquerque, NM, 4/11-18, Tommy Eichler, (773) 625-2101, teic1448@aol.com

NAVY

Fit Logistics Support Sqdn VR 53-60, Branson, MO, 5/20-23, Gary Schremp, (618) 698-6966, cargar@htc.net; **John Young DD 973**, Houston, 6/10-13, Michael Trotta, (727) 505-4222, reunion@dd973.org; **NSA Da Nang**, Branson, MO, 4/12-17, Bernard Uhrinek, (724) 353-9627; **NMCB 53**, Arlington, VA, 4/13-18, Jason Abell, (570) 247-1020, jason.abell@cableracer.com; **Ticonderoga CVI CVA/CVS 14 & CG 47**, Norfolk, VA, 5/14-17, Larry Qualter, (914) 734-7677, lqualter65@gmail.com; **Wallace L. Lind DD 703**, Savannah, GA, 5/20-23, Ed Bauscher, (502) 876-2137, eb62vette@aol.com

IN SEARCH OF

1st Sqd 1st Plt B Co 2nd Bn 15th Inf 3rd Div (Wildflecken, Germany, 1972-1974), Nazim Ali, (580) 649-9176, nali.2005@yahoo.com; **3rd Plt 501st MP Co (Bamberg, Germany, 1990-1993)**, Christopher Reed, (407) 412-1443; **152nd Armd Sig Co (WWII)**, Bill Vosseler, (610) 558-2163

B Co (Fort Polk, LA, Oct-Dec 1967), Pete "Rango" Rangel, 4911 Manor Stone Lane, Rosenberg, TX 77469
E Co 1st Bn 46th Inf 198th Light Inf Bde Americal Div (Chu Lai, Vietnam, Feb 1968), Curtis Lipps, (423) 605-3459, saraj7119@aol.com
L Co, Quartermaster School (Fort Lee, VA, Jan-Mar 1968), Pete "Rango" Rangel, 4911 Manor Stone Lane, Rosenberg, TX 77469
NAS Floyd Bennett Field, Ground Electronics Div (Brooklyn, NY, Sept 1964-Aug 1965), Rodney Martin, (313) 565-8830

TAPS

George Harper Jr., Dept. of Tennessee. Dept. Cmdr. 2013-2014, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 2019-2020, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2011-2013, Nat'l Conv. Resolutions Assignment Cmte. 2005-2011 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cncl. Memb. 2014-2020.

Harry G. Mantzouranis, Dept. of France. Dept. Cmdr. 1970-1972 and 1988-1993 (Dept. of Italy), and Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1966-1994.

Timothy J. Tierney, Dept. of Florida. Nat'l Health Admin. Cmte. Memb. 2017-2020.

CANCELED REUNIONS

If your military reunion has been canceled, let us know by sending an email to reunions@legion.org. For a list of canceled reunions, go to legion.org/reunions/canceled.



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Weird Herb Shocks Doctors With Relief of Leg and Feet Pain, Burning, Tingling, Numbness

6 clinical studies show it is effective. Lost but now re-discovered. Thousands of new users report amazing relief from leg and feet problems in just 30 to 90 days – with no side effects. Available in all 50 states without a prescription.

A re-discovery from the 1600s is causing a frenzy within the medical system. A weird herb has been shown in six clinical studies (and by thousands of users) to be very effective for leg and feet pain, burning and numbness – with no side effects – at low cost – and with no doctor visit or prescription needed.

This weird herb comes from a 12-foot tall tree that grows in Greece and other countries in Europe. In the old days, people noticed that when their horses who had leg and feet problems ate this herb – it was almost like magic how quickly their problems got much better. They called it the “horse herb”. Then somehow with Europe’s ongoing wars, this herbal secret got lost in time.

“It works for people who’ve tried many other treatments before with little or no success. Other doctors and I are shocked at how effective it is. It has created a lot of excitement” says Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D.

Its active ingredient has been put into pill form and improved. It is being offered in the United States under the brand name Neuroflo.

WHY ALL THIS EXCITEMENT?

Researchers have found an herb originally from Greece that has been shown in six placebo-controlled medical studies (543 participants) to be effective and safe. This natural compound strengthens blood vessel walls and reduces swelling to stop the pain and suffering.

Poor blood flow in the legs and feet is one of the common problems that develop as we age. Millions of Americans suffer from neuropathy and chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), edema, and other leg/feet problems – millions have these but are undiagnosed.

Today’s treatments don’t work for a high percentage of people – and they have side effects that make them hard to tolerate or that people do not want to risk. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter pain pills, surgery and compression.

Already popular in Europe, this natural herb is taking America by storm since it was announced last week.

HOW IT WORKS

Here’s why you have pain now: Your arteries have weakened. Your arteries can’t carry enough blood, nutrients and oxygen down to your legs and feet. This damages your nerves and causes your burning, tingling and numbness.

The herbs in the pill Neuroflo strengthen your arteries that carry blood, nutrients and oxygen to your feet and legs. It improves your circulation so oxygenated blood goes to the nerves and repairs them. This makes your nerves grow stronger so your pain fades away and your legs and feet feel much younger again.

Until now, scientists could not combine these herbs into one pill without losing their full potency, but finally, they have succeeded.

Katerina King from Murrieta, California says, “I had hands and feet tingling and snapping and burning feeling. It made my life very uncomfortable. I had a hard time walking, my legs felt like they each weighed 50 pounds. Once I got in my car and my feet felt so heavy I couldn’t even drive the car. With Neuroflo I have no more tingling, cold or burning painful legs and feet. It went away.”

WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

“Now I finally have a natural solution I can recommend to my patients who suffer from leg and feet problems and pain. I’m delighted because previous treatments were not effective, but Neuroflo has worked for every one of my patients with no side effects” says Dr. Eric Wood, N.D.

Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D. says “This is new and different. It works for people who’ve tried many other things before. It is natural with no side effects. Don’t give up hope for your leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbing. This pill is working for countless people after other treatments have failed them. I highly recommend it.”



RE-DISCOVERED LEG AND FEET PROBLEM

SOLUTION: In Greece in the 1600s, this herb was originally called “horse herb” because it was fed to horses with ailing legs. It has now been re-discovered and is giving soothing comfort to Americans who have leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbness.

“Neuroflo is a terrific choice for people with leg and feet issues. The clinical trials in support of this herb show it is very effective for safe and fast relief,” said Dr. Wood, a Harvard trained doctor who has appeared on award winning TV shows.

Now you can get a good night’s sleep – peaceful, restful sleep – with no pain, tingling, zinging, itching or zapping. Improve your balance and coordination. No side effects – safe to take with other medications. Enjoy your favorite activities and hobbies again. Be more active, have more fun, enjoy life more. Don’t risk damage to your feet and hands. Don’t let it get dangerously worse.

Neuroflo is GUARANTEED to work for you – or you will get full refund with a 90-day unconditional money-back guarantee. It is NOT sold in stores. No prescription or doctor visit is required.

50% OFF FOR THE NEXT 10 DAYS

This is the official release of Neuroflo in the state. Therefore, everyone who calls within the next 10 days will receive 50% OFF their first order. A toll-free hotline number has been set up for local readers to call for this 50% OFF savings. The number will be open starting at 7:00 am today and only for the next 10 days.

All you have to do is CALL TOLL-FREE **1-800-231-1335** and provide the operator with the special 50% OFF discount approval code: **NEF158**.

Important: Due to Neuroflo’s popularity and recent media exposure on ABC, CBS and FOX NEWS, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not get through immediately, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 10 day deadline for 50% OFF will have to pay more for Neuroflo.

People who work in customer service should be allowed to fight one customer per day.

TWO MEN were hotly discussing the merits of a book. Finally, one of them – himself an author – said to the other, “You can’t appreciate it because you never wrote a book yourself.”

“No,” the other man retorted, “and I never laid an egg, but I’m still a better judge of an omelet than any hen.”

THE NOISE of an all-night poker game in the next hotel room kept a tired tourist from sleeping. At 3 a.m. he started pounding on the wall, hoping to silence the revelers.

“Hey,” one of the gamblers shouted. “This is a heck of a time to be hanging pictures!”

WHERE DID people hang their children’s drawings before the refrigerator was invented?

A CUSTOMER ordered a Swiss cheese sandwich, then changed his mind.

“Would it be possible to change that to an American cheese sandwich?” he asked.

“Naturalize that Swiss,” the counterman called to the cook.

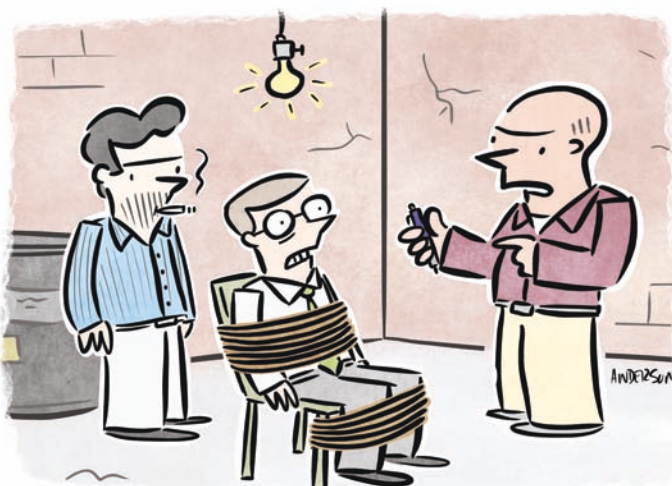
A STRUGGLING AUTHOR called on a publisher to ask about a manuscript she had submitted.

“This is quite good,” the publisher admitted, “but we publish works only by writers with well-known names.”

“That’s great!” the author exclaimed. “My name’s Smith.”



“You ask why I’m on your counter, but I could as easily ask why you’re on my floor.”



“Not gonna talk? OK. Maybe you will after I click this here ballpoint for a few hours.”

I HAD DINNER with a world chess champion and there was a checkered tablecloth. It took him two hours to pass the salt.

A MOTHER asked her son, “What did your father say when you wrecked the new car?”

“Shall I leave out the swear words?” he replied.

“Please.”

“Not a thing.”

THEY CALL IT a family tree because if you look hard enough, you’ll always find some sap in it.

“WHEN SOMEONE tries to hand me a flyer it’s kinda like they’re saying, ‘Here, you throw this away.’” – Mitch Hedberg

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